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**MR MIDSHIPMAN EASY**



"Duty before decency"

# MR MIDSHIPMAN EASY

BY

CAPTAIN MARRYAT

ABRIDGED AND ADAPTED FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

*With Four Original Illustrations*

P. VARADACHARY & CO.  
8 LINGHA CHETTY ST. MADRAS





## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Captain Marryat (1792-1848) is one of the best story-tellers for boys, not surpassed in his own province—the sea. Entering the navy as a midshipman at 14, he saw much service in the Mediterranean and took part in the Burmese War, 1824. He began his career as a writer in 1829 and more than 30 stories stand to his credit.

With 'an easy, effective style,' such excellent yarns, as *Peter Simple* and *Jacob Faithful*, *Midshipman Easy* (1836) and *Masterman Ready*, may be read with pleasure even by grownups. He has 'a hearty and healthy sense of fun,' which is much in evidence in *Midshipman Easy*. Equality Jack is one of the most delightful characters in fiction, which one is not likely to forget soon.



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# MR MIDSHIPMAN EASY

## CHAPTER I

### THE BIRTH, CHRISTENING AND BRINGING UP OF OUR HERO

MR NICODEMUS EASY was a gentleman who lived in Hampshire: married and in easy circumstances. Most couples find it very easy to have a family, but not always quite so easy to maintain them. Mr Easy was not at all uneasy on the latter score, as he had no children; but he was anxious to have them, as most people covet what they cannot obtain. After ten years, Mr Easy gave it up as a bad job.

Philosophy is said to console a man under disappointment; so Mr Easy turned philosopher, the very best profession a man can take up when he is fit for nothing else: he must be a very incapable person indeed who cannot talk nonsense. For some time he could not decide what his nonsense should consist of. At last he fixed upon the rights of man, equality and all that: how every person was born to inherit his share of the earth, a right at present only admitted to a certain length; that is, about six feet, for we all inherit our graves and are allowed to take possession without dispute. But no one would listen to his philosophy. The women would not acknowledge the rights of men, whom they declared always to be in the wrong; while the gentlemen, who were men of property and did not see the advantages of sharing with those who had none, allowed him to discuss the question

while they discussed his port wine. The wine was good, and if the arguments were not, we must take things as we find them in this world.

While Mr Easy talked philosophy, Mrs Easy played patience,<sup>1</sup> and they were a happy couple, riding side by side on their hobbies and never interfering with each other. Mutual forbearance will always ensure domestic felicity. But there was another cause for their agreeing so well. Upon any disputed question, Mr Easy invariably gave it up to Mrs Easy, telling her that she should have her own way—and this pleased her. But as Mr Easy always took care, when it came to the point, to have his way, he was pleased as well.

It was at the end of the eleventh year of their marriage that Mrs Easy had come to have her own suspicions.

At last no one could doubt it, not even Mr Easy, who opened his eyes very wide and snapped his fingers and danced with delight. Two months after this, Mrs Easy had to undergo "the pleasing punishment that women bear."<sup>2</sup>

But Mr Easy laughed at pain, as all philosophers do when it is suffered by other people and not by themselves.

In due course of time, Mrs Easy presented her husband with a fine boy, who is our hero.

It was the fourth day after Mrs Easy's confinement that Mr Easy sat near her in an easy-chair and said: "I have been thinking, my dear, about the name I shall give this child."

---

1. a game of cards, usually for one.

2. Shakespeare.

"Name, Mr Easy! Why, what name should you give it but your own?"

"Not so, my dear," replied Mr Easy; "they call all names proper names, but I think mine is not."

"Why, what's the matter with it?"

"The matter affects me as well as the boy. Nicodemus is a long name and Nick is vulgar. Besides, as there will be two Nicks, they will call my son young Nick, and of course I shall be styled old Nick,<sup>1</sup> which will be devilish."

"Well, Mr Easy, then let me choose the name."

"That you shall, my dear."

"I think, Mr Easy, I will call him Robert after my poor father."

"Very well, my dear, you shall have your own way. But there is one objection."

"An objection, Mr Easy?"

"Yes, my dear; Robert may be very well, but he is certain to be called Bob. You know, my dear, that ninety-nine shepherds' dogs out of one hundred are called Bob in our county. Now observe, your child is out of doors in the fields; you call him. Instead of your child, what do you find? Why, a dozen curs at least come running up to you, wagging their stumps of tails. Any other name you please, my dear, but in this one instance you must allow me to say no."

"Well then, I'll think of it; my head aches very much just now."

"I will think for you, my dear. What do you say to John?"

---

1. a familiar name for Devil.



“ Oh, such a common name !”

“ A proof of its popularity, my dear. It is scriptural—we have the apostle<sup>1</sup>—we have a dozen popes who were all Johns. It is royal—we have plenty of kings of that name. Moreover, it is short, and sounds honest and manly.”

“ Yes, very true, my dear ; but they will call him Jack.”

“ Well, we have had several celebrated characters who were Jacks—Jack the Giant Killer and Jack of the Bean Stalk and—”

“ Jack Soratt,<sup>2</sup>” replied Mrs Easy.

“ And Jack Cade, Mrs Easy, the great rebel,<sup>3</sup> and Three-fingered Jack, the celebrated negro, and above all, Jack Falstaff,<sup>4</sup> ma a.L., honest Jack Falstaff—witty Jack Falstaff—”

“ I thought, Mr Easy, that I was to be permitted to choose the name.”

“ So you shall, my dear ; do just as you please : but depend upon it that John is the right name.”

“ It's the way you always treat me, Mr Easy ; I never have my own way. I am sure that the child will be christened John.”

He denied this, but presently mentioned several Greek emperors of the name of John. She gave it up as useless and wearisome ; and the child was named John.

It is very difficult to throw any interest into a chapter on childhood. There is the same uniformity in all children

(1) 1. one of the twelve disciples of Christ.

2. a hero of nursery rhymes and tales, like the Jacks referred to above.

3. see any book of English History : 1450.

4. famous character in Shakespeare's *I Henry IV*.

until they develop. We cannot, therefore, say much relative to Jack's earliest days. He sucked and threw up his milk, crowed like a cock in the morning, screamed when he was washed, and made wry faces at the wind. Six months passed in this way and then he was put into shorts.

Soon afterwards he began to crawl, snatched at every thing, squeezed the kitten to death, scratched his mother and pulled his father by the hair. In brief, Jack was brought up in the way that every only child usually is—that is, he was allowed to have his own way.

## CHAPTER II

HOW THE DOCTOR PRESCRIBES GOING TO SCHOOL  
AS A REMEDY FOR A CUT FINGER AND JACK IS SENT  
TO A SCHOOL WHERE THERE IS NO FLOGGING

JACK was now in his ninth year. But the idiosyncrasy<sup>1</sup> of the father and the doting folly of the mother were fast making him a spoiled child. So when one day the doctor, Mr Middleton, was suddenly summoned to attend upon Jack for having cut his thumb in one of his pranks, he suggested to the father, after sending Mrs Easy away with the boy, that he should send the boy to school.

Mr Easy crossed his legs, and clasped his hands together over his knees, as he always did when he was about to commence an argument.

"The great objection to do so," he said, "is that the discipline enforced is, not only contrary to the rights of man, but opposed to all sound sense and common judgment. All punishment is tyranny, but flogging is worse, as it degrades the boy in his own eye. Is he to learn benevolence by the

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1. mental oddity or peculiarity.

angry look and the flourish of the vindictive<sup>1</sup> birch—or forbearance by the cruelty of the ushers<sup>2</sup>—or patience, when the masters over him are out of all patience—or modesty, when his nether<sup>3</sup> parts are exposed to general examination? Do not the boys receive their first lesson in slavery with the first lesson in A B C, their minds prostrated,<sup>4</sup> ever to bow to despotism, to cringe to rank, to think and act by the precepts of others? No, sir, unless they teach without resorting to such a fundamental error as flogging, my boy shall never go to school.”

Dr Middleton knew his man and, after listening to Mr Easy to the end, said, “I will grant all you say. But Mr Easy, by keeping a boy uneducated, you allow him to fall into that error which you wish him to avoid: for education conquers prejudice and makes him break through the bonds of custom. Moreover, the birch is used at a time when the mind is elastic and soon forgets it; and after he has learnt the rudiments<sup>5</sup> of education, you may then take him in hand for teaching him your valuable lessons.”

“I will teach him everything myself,” said Mr Easy, folding his arms determinedly.

“I do not doubt your capacity, Mr Easy; but—if I must speak plain—you must be aware that the maternal fondness of Mrs Easy will always be a bar to your intention. He is already so spoiled by her that he will not obey; and without obedience you cannot teach.”

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1. showing a revengeful spirit.

2. assistant masters.

3. lower. Flogging is now confined to criminals.

4. overcome.      5. elements or first principles of a subject, etc.

"I grant that there is that difficulty; but maternal weakness must then be overcome by paternal severity."

"That you would hit upon some scheme to obtain the necessary power over him, I have no doubt; but consider the consequence. The boy will look upon his mother as a protector, and you as a tyrant. With this aversion for you, how can you make him attend to your valuable precepts when he arrives at an age to understand them? This difficulty may be got over by sending him to school. I know a very worthy clergyman who does not use the birch; and then if your boy is removed from the danger of Mrs Easy's over-indulgence, in a short time he will be ready for your more important tuition."

Mr Easy thought there was reason in the doctor's contention,<sup>1</sup> especially concerning Mrs Easy, and was willing to follow the doctor's advice if only his friend did not apply the rod.

The next day the doctor returned with a letter from the master concerned, in which the use of the birch was indignantly disowned; and Mr Easy told his wife that day at tea-time his intentions in regard to John.

"Send a mere infant to school! Why, he almost reads already; surely I can teach him that. Oh, Mr Easy, what can have put this in your head? Johnny dear, tell me what is the letter A?"

"I want some sugar," replied Johnny, stretching his arm over the table to the sugar-basin which was out of his reach.

---

1. (point, contended for in) argument.

“Well, my love, you shall have a great lump if you will tell me what’s the letter A.”

“A was an archer and shot at a frog,” replied Johnny in a surly tone.

“There now, Mr Easy; and he can go through the whole alphabet. Come, Johnny dear, tell us what’s B.”

“No, I won’t,” replied Johnny, “I want some more sugar;” and Johnny, who had climbed on a chair, spread himself over the table to reach it.

“Mercy, Sarah, pull him off—he’ll upset the urn,” screamed Mrs Easy. His nurse caught hold of him to pull him back, but he resisted this and kicked her in the face as he lay on the table. In doing this his head came in contact with the urn containing boiling liquid, and upset it, scalding the legs of Mr Easy, who stamped and swore very unphilosophically.

Sarah and Mrs Easy had caught up Johnny, both holding him at the same time, exclaiming and lamenting. The pain of the burn and the indifference shown him were too much for Mr Easy’s temper to put up with. He snatched him out of their arms, and quite forgetting his equality and rights of man, belaboured<sup>1</sup> him without mercy. Sarah flew in to interfere and was sent reeling on the floor. Mrs Easy went off in hysterics<sup>2</sup> and Johnny howled so as to be heard at quarter of a mile.

Just then the door opened, and Mr Easy looked up while still continuing the punishment, and perceived Dr Middleton in mute astonishment. Johnny was dropped, who lay roaring on the floor; Sarah, Mrs Easy and the urn were all

---

1. thrashed.

2. fits or convulsions brought on by excitement, etc. (esp. in women).

on the floor; and although Mr Easy was not, he had not a leg to stand upon.

Dr Middleton, as in duty bound, first picked up Mrs Easy and laid her on the sofa. Sarah rose, picked up Johnny, and carried him kicking and roaring out of the room. The doctor rang the bell, and summoned all the maids, who carried Mrs Easy upstairs; and then the doctor attended to the only patient who really required his assistance. Mr Easy soon obtained bodily relief from the doctor's application. But it annoyed him more that the doctor had witnessed his infringement<sup>1</sup> of equality and the rights of man. The doctor knew this and the remedy for it too.

"My dear Mr Easy, I am very sorry for this accident, for which you are indebted to Mrs Easy's foolish indulgence of the boy. Solomon says that 'he who spares the rod spoils the child,' meaning that it is the duty of a father to correct his children. The son being a part or portion of the father, he is correcting his own self in punishing his son, and feels as much pain in doing so, as if he were himself punished. Therefore here is no question of equality and the rights of man, but only self-discipline."

"That is exactly my opinion," replied Mr Easy, thanking the doctor mentally for having explained away his inconsistency so well. "But—he shall go to school tomorrow—that I'm determined on."

It was then arranged that the doctor should take the boy with him in his carriage the next day, as he had a patient to see at Mr Bonnycastle's school. He also cleverly induced Mrs Easy not to say anything about the

---

1. violation.

matter, as he made her believe that Mr Easy was still very angry with the boy. The violent resistance of Johnny was, of course, of no avail.

### CHAPTER III

#### HOW JACK EASY IS EDUCATED IN SPITE OF HIMSELF WITHOUT FLOGGING

ON reaching Bonnycastle's place, Master Jack had been plumped down in a chair by the doctor's servant, and he sat there all of a heap, looking like a lump of sulks.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Bonnycastle presently made his appearance—a tall, well-built man, handsome, dressed becomingly. When he smiled he showed a row of teeth white as ivory, and his mild blue eye expressed the utmost beneficence. It was impossible to see him and hear his mild pleasing voice without wishing that all your sons were under his protection. He was a ripe scholar and a good one, and had at the time the care of more than one hundred boys. He was celebrated for turning them out well and many of his pupils were distinguishing themselves in the higher professions.

Dr Middleton rose as he entered the room and they shook hands. Middleton, pointing to Jack, said, "Look there." Bonnycastle smiled. "I cannot say that I have had worse, but I have almost as bad. I will apply the Promethean torch,<sup>2</sup> and soon vivify that rude mass. Come, sit down, Middleton."

"But, Bonnycastle," said Middleton, as he resumed the chair, "tell me how you will manage to lick such a cub into shape when you do not resort to flogging."

---

1. sullenness or ill-temper personified.

2. Prometheus, Greek demigod, stole fire from Heaven and put it into men whom he had made of clay, thus giving them life.

"I have no opinion of flogging, and therefore do not resort to it. The fact is I was at Harrow<sup>1</sup> myself, and was rather a pickle.<sup>2</sup> I was called up as often as most boys in the school, and I perfectly recollect that eventually I cared nothing for a flogging. It leaves nothing behind to refresh their memory."

"I should have thought otherwise."

"I can produce, my dear Middleton, more effect by one caning than twenty floggings. Flogging is confined only to one part; but you cane upon all parts from the head to the heels. After a flogging, a boy may run out in the hours of recreation and join his playmates as well as ever, but a good caning tells a very different tale. He cannot move one part of his body without being reminded for days by the pain of the punishment he has undergone, and he is very careful how he is called up again."

"You are a terrorist, Bonnycastle," replied Middleton.

"Look at that cub, doctor, sitting there more like a brute than a reasonable being. Do you imagine that I could ever lick it into shape without strong measures? At the public schools punishment is no check: with me punishment is punishment in the true sense of the word and the result is that it is less often resorted to."

Then the doctor told him of the eccentricity<sup>3</sup> of the boy's father and the circumstances attending Jack being sent to school, and took his leave of the master.

Although Mr Bonnycastle was severe, he was very judicious. Mischief of all kinds was leniently treated, though he checked oppression. The essential thing with

---

1. a famous public school in England.

2. a mischievous child.

3. oddity or singularity of conduct.



him was attention to their studies. The idle boy, the bird who 'could sing, and wouldn't sing,' received no mercy. The consequence was that he turned out the cleverest boys, and though he was feared when they were under his control, he was invariably liked by those whom he had instructed, and they continued his friends in after life.

Bonnycastle soon saw that he must control the boy only by fear. So he now addressed him in a commanding tone, "Now, boy, what is your name?"

Jack started; he looked up at his master and perceived a countenance not to be played with. Jack was no fool, and somehow or other the discipline he had received from his father had given him some intimation of what was to come. So he was pleased to answer, with his forefinger between his teeth, "Johnny."

"Do you know why you are sent to school?"

"Scalding father."

"No: you are sent to learn to read and write."

"But I won't read and write," replied Jack sulkily.

"Yes, you will: and you are going to read your letters directly."

Jack made no answer. Bonnycastle opened a sort of bookcase and displayed to John's astonished view a series of canes and asked, "Do you know what these are for?"

Jack eyed them wistfully; <sup>1</sup> he had some faint idea that he was sure to be better acquainted with them, but he made no answer.

"They are to teach little boys to read and write, and now I am going to teach you. Look now here," continued

---

1. with a vague desire to understand.

Bonnycastle, opening a book with large type and taking a capital at the head of a chapter. "Do you see that letter?"

"Yes," replied Johnny, turning his eyes away.

"Well, that is the letter B. Do you see it? Look at it, so that you may know it again. Now tell me what that letter is."

Jack now determined to resist and made no answer.

"So you cannot tell; well then, we will try what one of these little fellows will do," said Bonnycastle, taking down a cane. "Johnny, that's the letter B. Now, what letter is that? Answer me directly."

"I won't learn to read and write."

Whack came the cane on Johnny's shoulders, who burst out into a roar as he writhed with pain. Jack would not, however, yield so readily. Whack came down the cane again and again. Johnny made a snatch at the cane. Whack—he caught it certainly, but not as he would have wished. Johnny then snatched up the book and dashed it to the corner of the room. Whack, whack. Johnny attempted to bite Bonnycastle. Whack, whack, whack; and Johnny fell on the carpet and roared with pain. Bonnycastle then left him for a while to recover himself, and sat down.

At last Johnny's exclamations settled down in deep sobs, and then the master said to him, "Now, Johnny, you see that you must do as you are bid, or else you'll have more beating. Get up immediately. Do you hear, sir?"

Johnny, without intending it, stood upon his feet.

"That's a good boy; now you see, by getting up as you were bid, you have not been beaten. Now, Johnny, you must go and bring the book from where you threw it down. Do you hear, sir? Bring it directly."

Johnny looked at the master and the cane. With every intention to refuse, Johnny picked up the book and laid it on the table.

"That's a good boy; now we will find the letter B. Here it is : now, Johnny, tell me what that letter is." Johnny made no answer. "Tell me directly, sir," said the master, raising the cane in the air. The appeal was too powerful. Johnny eyed the cane : it moved, it was coming. Breathlessly he shrieked out, "B."

"Very well indeed, Johnny—very well. Now your first lesson is over, and you shall go to bed. You have learned more than you think. Tomorrow we will begin again."

Mr Bonnycastle rang the bell, and desired Master Johnny to be put to bed in a room by himself and not to be given any supper. Pain and hunger alone will tame brutes, and the same remedy must be applied to the brute in man. Johnny was not only in pain, but his ideas were confused ; and no wonder, after all the caresses of his mother and Sarah ; at the same time he was also subdued. He had, indeed, learned, as Bonnycastle told him, more than he had any idea of. At the very time that Johnny was having the devil driven out of him, his parents were consoling themselves with the idea that, at all events, there was no birch used at Mr Bonnycastle's, forgetting that there are more ways of killing a dog than by hanging him. Happy in their ignorance, they went fast asleep, while Johnny had cried himself to sleep at least six hours before them.

The next morning Master Jack was not only very sore, but very hungry, and was told that he would not only have plenty of cane, but also no breakfast, if he did not learn his

letters. Johnny had therefore the wisdom to say the whole alphabet, for which he received a great deal of praise. Mr Bonnycastle perceived that he had conquered the boy by an hour's well-timed severity. Johnny thereafter became a very tractable<sup>1</sup> boy

His mother too soon reconciled herself to his being at school and not coming back except during the holidays. John Easy made rapid progress; he had good natural abilities, and Mr Easy was pleased. Each vacation he had attempted to instil<sup>2</sup> into Johnny's mind the equal rights of man. Johnny showed that his father's discourses<sup>3</sup> were not thrown away by helping himself to everything he wanted without asking leave. His education went on thus till he was sixteen, when he was a stout, good-looking boy, with plenty to say for himself—indeed, when it suited his purpose, he could outtalk his father.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### HOW JACK PROVES HIMSELF A WORTHY SON

NOTHING pleased Mr Easy so much as Jack's talkativeness. "That's right; argue the point, Jack," would he say, as Jack disputed with his mother. And then he would call Jack and give him a guinea for his cleverness; and at last Jack thought it a very clever thing to argue. He never would attempt to argue with Bonnycastle, because he knew the latter's arguments were too strong for him: but he argued with the boys, until it ended in a fight which decided the point; and he sometimes argued with the ushers. In short, at the time we speak of—it was Midsummer

---

1. manageable.

2. put (in); infuse.

3. talks or lectures.

holidays—Jack was as full of argument, as he was fond of it.

Jack had been fishing in the river for a whole morning without any success and, observing a large pond which seemed well stocked, threw in his line. He had pulled up several fine fish, when he was accosted<sup>1</sup> by the proprietor, accompanied by a couple of keepers.

“May I request the pleasure of your name, young gentleman,” said the proprietor to Jack.

Now Jack was always urbane<sup>2</sup> and polite. “Certainly, sir; my name is Easy, very much at your service.”

“And you appear to me to be taking it very easy,” replied the gentleman. “Pray, sir, may I enquire whether you know that you are trespassing?”

“It implies, according to the ordinary meaning, coming without permission upon the land or property of another. But, my dear sir, the word will admit of much argument. The question may be stated thus: Was not the world made for all? Has any one or any portion of its inhabitants an exclusive right to claim any part of it as his property? If you please, we will now argue the point.”

The gentleman had heard of Mr Easy and his arguments; and, being a humorist, was more inclined to laugh than to be angry. At the same time he wished to show Jack that, under existing circumstances, they were untenable.<sup>3</sup>

“Surely, Mr Easy, you do not mean to say that you are justified in taking my fish. I bought the fish, and stocked the pond, and have fed them ever since. You cannot deny

- 
1. made up to and addressed.
  2. courteous ; refined.
  3. not maintainable.

that they are private property, and that to take them is a theft?"

"That will admit of much argument, my dear sir," replied Jack; "but—I beg your pardon, I have a fish." Jack pulled up a large carp,<sup>1</sup> much to the indignation of the keepers and to the amusement of their master, placed it in his basket, renewed his bait with the greatest coolness, and then throwing in his line, resumed his discourse. "As I was observing, my dear sir, that will admit of much argument. **All** the creatures of the earth were given to man for his use—they were never intended to be made the private property of any one. If the fish, in breeding, only acted in obedience to an instinct with which they are endowed for the supply of man, then you cannot prove these fish to be yours more than mine. As for feeding with the idea that they were your own, that is not an unusual case in **this** world, even when a man is giving bread and butter to **his** children."

"Then, Mr Easy, you mean to say that the world and its contents are made for all."

"Exactly, sir; that is my father's opinion, who is a **great** philosopher."

"How then does your father account for some possessing property and others being without it?"

"Because those who are strongest have deprived those who are weaker."

"But would not that be always the case? Allowing **two** men to chase the same animal and both to come up to it at the same time, would not the stronger bear it off?"

---

1. a fresh-water or pond fish.

“That does not disprove that men were not intended to be equal; it only proves that they are not so; it only proves that the strong will take advantage of the weak, which is very natural.”

“Well, I am glad to perceive that we are of one mind there. You'll observe that I and my keepers, being three, are the stronger party. Even granting your argument about the fish, still I take advantage of my strength to repossess myself of the fish, which is, as you say, very natural. James, take those fish.”

Jack wished to argue the point. “Not at all,” the other replied. “I will act according to your arguments. I have the fish, and mean to have more: that fishing-rod is as much mine as yours. James, William, take that fishing-rod, it is ours.”

“I trust,” replied Jack, “that you will allow me to say that I never yet have asserted that what a man creates by himself, or has created for him for a consideration,<sup>1</sup> is not his own property.”

“I beg your pardon: the trees that that rod was made of were made for us all; and if you, or any one for you, have thought proper to make it into a rod, it is no more my fault than it is that I have been feeding the fish with the supposition that they were my own. Moreover, being the stronger party, and having possession of this land which you say does not belong to me—I also shall direct my keepers to see you off this property.”

He then asked his men to see him off the grounds, and departed. James was busy with the fish and William asked Jack to give up the rod. Jack as usual tried to argue with

1. thing given or done as inducement; a legal term.

him, and was put out by the other's curt<sup>1</sup> remark that he had never heard good arguments in favour of poaching<sup>2</sup> and that a gentleman like Jack had no excuse for it. James now put in that, as all men were equal, Jack was no more a gentleman than they were. This made Jack very angry, who once more asserted, "This pond is as much my property, as it is of your master who has usurped the right."

"I say, James, shall we put the young gentleman in possession of his property?" said William, winking at the other. James took the hint; they both seized Jack by the arms and legs, and soused<sup>3</sup> him into the pond. Then they walked away, carrying with them the rod and line, fish and tin-can of bait, laughing loudly at their practical joke. In the meantime, Jack arose, and floundered<sup>4</sup> on shore, blowing and spluttering.

"Well," he thought, "either there must be a mistake in my father's philosophy, or else this is a very wicked world. I shall submit this case to my father."

His father replied, "This is the age of iron, in which might has become right; but the time will come when these truths will be admitted. As truth is truth, never give up your argument, even if you are dragged through all the horse-ponds in the kingdom."

"That I never will, sir," replied Jack. "But the next time I argue, it shall be, if possible, with power on my side, and, at all events, not quite so near a pond."

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1. noticeably or rudely brief.

2. taking game or fish illegally.

3. plunged.

4. proceeded in a bungling or struggling manner.



## CHAPTER V

### HOW JACK PUTS TO FURTHER TEST HIS FATHER'S SUBLIME PHILOSOPHY

A FEW days afterwards, Jack discovered, on the other side of a hedge, a summer apple-tree bearing tempting fruit. He broke through the hedge, climbed the tree and began to eat the fairest. Presently he heard a rough voice asking him what he was doing there. Jack looked down, and saw a stout, thick-set personage in gray coat underneath him.

"Don't you see what I'm about?" replied Jack: "I'm eating apples—shall I throw you down a few?"

"Thank you; the fewer that are pulled the better. You are so free with them you think perhaps that they are your own property."

"Not a bit more my property than they are yours, my good man."

"I guess that's something like the truth; but you are not quite at the truth yet, my lad. Those apples are mine, and I'll trouble you to come down as fast as you please. When you're down, we can settle our accounts," said the man, shaking his cudgel.

Jack did not like the appearance of things. He pointed out that property was a prejudice and that all fruits were given for the benefit of all, appealing to the Bible for his authority. The other replied he could not find it there, though he had read it several times.

"Then," said Jack, "go home and fetch the Bible, and I'll prove it to you."

"I suspect you'll not wait till I come back. No, no; I have lost plenty of apples, and have long wanted to find out the robbers. So come down, you young thief, or it will be all the worse for you."

Jack replied that he was all right where he was, and would argue the point from there.

"If you don't choose to come down, you may stay there, and I'll see that I find you here on my return."

"What can be done," thought Jack, "with a man who will not listen to argument? What a world is this!"

The farmer now summoned a fierce-looking bull-dog and said, "Mark him, Caesar." The dog crouched down on the grass, with his head up, and eyes glaring at Jack, showing a range of teeth that drove all our hero's philosophy out of his head.

"Caesar can wait here, and I will tell you, as a friend, that if he gets hold of you, he'll not leave a limb of you together." So saying, the farmer walked off.

After a while the dog laid his head down and closed his eyes as if asleep, but Jack observed that at the least movement on his part one eye was seen to partially unclose.

So Jack, like a prudent man, resolved to remain where he was. Picking a few more apples, he ruminated <sup>1</sup> as he chewed.

Just then another ruminating animal, a bull, came into the orchard, and tossed his head at the sight of Caesar whom he considered a trespasser. Caesar started on his legs, and faced the bull, who advanced with his tail up in the air. When within a few yards the bull made a rush at the dog,

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1. reflected: literally in reference to animals (like cattle, etc.) = 'chewed the cud.'



"All following the eating of a few apples"

and this warfare took the opponents to some distance from the apple-tree. Jack took the opportunity to slip down the trunk, when he heard a tremendous roar: the bull-dog had been tossed by the bull; Jack saw him fall on the other side of the hedge; and the bull was thus celebrating his victory. Jack now rapidly slipped down the tree and took to his heels. Unfortunately for him, the bull saw him and, flushed with victory, bounded after him with another roar. Jack saw his danger, and fear gave him wings. He flew over the orchard, and over the hedge which was about five feet high. He found he had landed on a small apiary,<sup>1</sup> upsetting two hives of bees which resented the disturbance: and before he could recover his legs, he found them busy stinging him in all quarters. Jack ran for it, but the bees flew faster. Mad with pain, he ran on, and stumbled, half-blinded, over the brickwork of a well. Jack could not stop pitching into the well, but he seized the iron chain as it struck him across the face. Down went Jack, and round went the windlass,<sup>2</sup> and after a rapid descent of forty feet our hero found himself under water, with no other companion than Truth. Jack rose from the water, and seized the rope to which the chain of the bucket was made fast. Striking against the bucket presently, he put his feet into it, and found himself pretty comfortable, reflecting on the chain of events that brought him there, all following the eating of a few apples.

“I have got rid of the farmer, and the dog, and the bull, and the bees—all's well that ends well; but how the devil am I to get out of the well? All creation appears to have

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1. place where bees are kept.

2. machine on wheel-and-axle principle for hauling, etc.

conspired against the rights of man. As my father said, this is an iron age, and here I am swinging to an iron chain."

After he had been there some fifteen minutes, his teeth chattered, his limbs trembled, and he thought it high time to call for assistance. He was arranging his jaws for a halloo, when he felt the chain pulled up, and he slowly emerged from the water. At first he heard complaints of the weight of the bucket, at which he was not surprised; then he heard a tittering and laughing between two parties, and soon afterwards mounted up gaily. At last his head appeared above the low wall, and he was about to extend his arms to secure a position on it, when those who were working at the windlass beheld him. It was a heavy farming-man and a maid-servant.

"Thank you," said Jack.

One never should be too quick in returning thanks; the girl screamed and let go the winch;<sup>1</sup> the man, frightened, did not hold it fast: it slipped from his grasp, whirled round, struck him under the chin and threw him over it headlong; and down went Jack like lightning to the bottom. Fortunately for Jack, he had not yet let go the chain, or he might have struck the sides and have been killed. As it was, he was merely soused a second time, and in a minute or two regained his former position.

"This is mighty pleasant," thought Jack: "at all events, they can't now plead ignorance: they must know I'm here."

In the meantime the girl ran into the kitchen, threw herself down on a stool, from which she reeled off in a fit

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1. crank or arm of a wheel or axle: (windlass).

upon sundry heaps of dough waiting to be baked in the oven; which were laid to rise on the floor before the fire.

"Mercy on me, what is the matter with Susan?" cried the farmer's wife. "Here—where's Mary? where's John?"

John soon followed, holding his under-jaw in his hand, looking very frightened, for two reasons: one, because he thought that his jaw was broken, and the other, because he thought he had seen the devil.

This only served to frighten the farmer's wife. Susan lay senseless like one dead, and Mary and her mistress raised up Susan. "Why don't you come here and help Susan, John?" cried Mary.

"Aw-yaw-aw!" was all the reply of John.

"What's the matter here, missus?" exclaimed the farmer, coming in. "Highly-tighty, what ails Susan, and what ails you?" continued the farmer, turning to John. "Dang<sup>1</sup> it, but everything seems to go wrong this blessed day. First there be all the apples stolen—then all the hives turned topsy-turvy in the garden—then Caesar with his flank opened by the bull—then the bull broken through the hedge and tumbled into the saw-pit—and now I find one woman dead like, and John looks as if he had seen the devil."

"Aw-yaw-aw!" replied John, nodding his head significantly.

"One would think the devil had broke loose today. What is it, John? Have you seen him and has Susan seen him?" "Aw-yaw."

By this time Susan had come round, who cried—"Oh madam! the well, the well—"

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1. =damn: a euphemism.

"The well! Something wrong there, I suppose; well, I will go and see."

The farmer hurried off to the well, and looked in. Jack, who had been looking up for some time for the assistance which he expected would have come sooner, now cried—"Here I am; get me up quick, or I shall be dead;" and what he said was true, for he was quite done up by having been so long down, although his courage had not failed him.

"Dang it; no end to mishaps this day," said the farmer.

"Well, we must get a Christian out of a well afore<sup>1</sup> we get a bull out of a saw-pit: so I'll go call the men."

He returned soon with the men, and Jack was soon pulled up and laid down on the ground, for Jack's strength had failed him.

"Dang it, if it bean't that chap who was on my apple-tree," cried the farmer; "howsomever,<sup>2</sup> he must not die for stealing a few apples; lift him up, lads, and take him in—he is dead with cold—no wonder."

Jack was carried into the house and presently was brought round. After some conversation, the farmer asked him his name. When Jack told him his name, the other exclaimed:

"Dang it, he be my landlord, and a right good landlord too. Why didn't you say so when you were up in the apple-tree? You might have picked the whole orchard and welcome."

"My dear sir," replied Jack, who was now quite talkative again, "let this be a warning to you, and when a man

1. before: (dialect).

2. nevertheless; however: (dialect).

proposes to argue the point, always, in future, listen. You send for your dog, who is ripped up by the bull—the bull breaks his leg in a saw-pit—the bee-hives are overturned and you lose all your honey—your man John breaks his jaw—your maid spoils the bread—and why? because you would not listen to argument.”

“Well, Mr Easy, it may be so. But let's take your side of the question. You get up in a tree for a few apples, with plenty of money to buy them if you like—you are kept there by a dog—you are nearly gored<sup>1</sup> by a bull—you are stung by the bees, and you tumble down into a well, and are nearly killed a dozen times, and all for a few apples not worth twopence.”

“All very true, my good man,” replied Jack; “but you forget that I, as a philosopher, was defending the rights of man.”

“Well, I never knew before that a lad who stole apples was called a philosopher—we call it petty larceny.”<sup>2</sup>

“You do not comprehend the matter, farmer.”

“No, I don't, and I am too old to learn, Master Easy, Well, you are welcome to all my apples, if you please. If you prefer to steal them, instead of asking for them, I can only account for it by the reason that stolen fruit is the sweetest. My chaise is at the door, Master Easy, and the man will drive you to your father's.”

As Jack was much more inclined for bed than argument, he wished the farmer good-night, and allowed himself to be driven home.

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1. pierced with horn.

2. theft.



## CHAPTER VI

### HOW JACK COMES TO A MOMENTOUS DECISION

THE pain from the sting of the bees began to make itself felt now, and he was not therefore sorry to find Dr Middleton taking his tea with his parents. Jack merely said that he had been so unfortunate as to upset a hive and had been severely stung. The doctor prescribed for Jack, but on taking his hand found that he was in a high fever which, after the events of the day, was not to be wondered at. Jack was bled, and kept his bed for a week; but during that time Jack had been thinking very seriously, and had made up his mind.

The presence of a Captain Wilson on the evening in question was probably the cause of this decision on his part. He was a sort of cousin to the family, and used to visit them only occasionally, for he had a large family with nothing but his half-pay for their support. The object of his present visit was to request the aid of Mr Easy. He had secured his appointment to a sloop of war (for he was in the king's service), but was without the means of fitting himself out, without leaving his wife and family penniless. Mr Easy, always having plenty of spare cash at his banker's, gave him a cheque for a thousand pounds for the few hundreds asked for, requesting Captain Wilson to repay it at his convenience. The affair had just been concluded, and Captain Wilson had returned to the parlour with Mr Easy, when Jack returned from his expedition.

Jack greeted Captain Wilson, whom he had long known; but, as we before observed, he suffered so much pain that he soon retired with the doctor and went to bed.

During a week there is room for much reflection even in a lad of his years. It was on the eighth day that Jack left his bed and came down into the drawing-room. He then detailed to his father the adventures which had obliged him to take to his bed.

"You see, Jack," replied his father, "it's just what I have told you. The world is so utterly demoralised that any one who opposes it must expect to pass the life of a martyr: but martyrs are always required previous to any truth being received and, like Abraham,<sup>1</sup> I am willing to sacrifice my only son in so noble a cause."

"That's all very good on your part, father. If you are as great a philosopher as Abraham, I am not quite so dutiful a son as Isaac, whose blind obedience, in my opinion, is contrary to your rights of man. The fact briefly is this. In spreading your philosophy, in the short space of two days, I have been robbed of the fish I caught and my rod and line, soused into a fish-pond, frightened out of my wits by a bull-dog, nearly killed by a bull, stung to death by bees, and twice tumbled into a well. If all that happens in two days, what must I expect to suffer in a year?"

"It appears to be very unwise to attempt making converts, for people on shore seem determined not to listen to reason or argument. It has occurred to me that, although the earth has been unjustly divided among the few, the waters at least are the property of all. No man claims his share of the sea. Even war makes no

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1. Father of the Jewish race, was ready to sacrifice his son Isaac to God at His bidding for the prosperity of the race. God only tested him and Isaac was not sacrificed.

difference ; every one may go on as he pleases. It is then only upon the ocean that I am likely to find that equality and rights of man which we are so anxious to establish on shore. Therefore, I have resolved not to go to school again, which I detest, but to go to sea and spread our opinions as much as I can."

"I cannot listen to that, Jack. In the first place, you must return to school ; in the next place, you shall not go to sea."

"Who and what is to prevent me, father? Was I not born my own master? Has any one a right to dictate to me as if I were not his equal? Have I not as much right to my share of the sea as any other? I stand upon perfect equality," continued Jack, stamping his right foot on the floor.

Mr Easy was in a difficult position : he must either, as a philosopher, have sacrificed his hypothesis, or, as a father, sacrificed his son. Like all philosophers, he preferred what he considered the less important of the two—he sacrificed his *son*. But, to do him justice, he did it with a sigh.

Jack had his way, and Captain Wilson was written to, who gladly consented to take Jack under his care.

## CHAPTER VII

### HOW JACK HAS HIS FIRST LESSON AS TO ZEAL IN HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE

OUR hero very soon bade adieu to his parents and found his way down to Portsmouth. As Jack had plenty of money and was very much pleased at finding himself his own master, he was in no hurry to join his ship; and

Captain Wilson knew of his arrival only from a letter from Mr Easy. The captain then desired his first-lieutenant to make enquiries, and Mr Sawbridge, who went on shore for the last time previous to the ship's sailing, went round the inns and found him at the Fountain.

"Show me up to the first floor," said the first-lieutenant to the waiter, on learning that Jack was there.

The waiter walked upstairs, followed by Mr Sawbridge and threw open the door. Sawbridge, who was not in his uniform, entered, and perceived Jack alone, with the dinner-table laid out in the best style for eight, much more fit, according to Sawbridge, for a commander-in-chief than a midshipman of a sloop of war.

Now Sawbridge was a good officer, one who had really worked his way up to the present rank, that is to say, that he had served for seven and twenty years and had nothing but his pay. Though he was irritated by all this display in a lad who was very shortly to be, and ought three weeks before to have been, shrinking from his frown, he was really a good-hearted man.

"May I beg to ask," said Jack, who was always polite and gentlemanly in his address, "in what manner I may be of service to you?"

"Yes, sir, you may—by joining your ship immediately. And may I beg to ask in return, sir, what is the reason you have stayed on shore three weeks without joining her?"

Jack did not much admire the tone of Sawbridge and, taking his seat, coolly replied: "And pray, who are you?"

"Who am I, sir?" replied Sawbridge, jumping out of his chair—my name is Sawbridge, sir, and I am the first-lieutenant of the *Harpy*. Now, sir, you have your answer."

Sawbridge, who imagined that his office would strike terror to a culprit midshipman, threw himself back in his chair and assumed an air of importance.

"Really, sir," said Jack, "what may be your exact situation on board, my ignorance of the service will not allow me to guess; but I can easily see you have no small opinion of yourself."

"Look you, young man, I take it for granted that you do not know what a first-lieutenant is by your behaviour. But depend upon it, I'll let you know very soon. In the meantime, sir, I insist that you go immediately on board."

"I'm sorry that I cannot comply with your moderate request," replied Jack coolly; "and I beg that you will give yourself no further trouble on my account."

Jack then rang the bell; the waiter, who had been listening outside, entered immediately; and before Sawbridge, who was dumb with astonishment at Jack's impertinence, could say anything:

"Waiter," said Jack, "show this gentleman downstairs."

"By the god of war!" exclaimed the first-lieutenant, "but I'll soon show you down to the boat, my young bantam;<sup>1</sup> and when once I get you safe on board, I'll make you know the difference between a midshipman and a first-lieutenant."

"I can only admit of *equality*, sir," replied Jack; "we are all born equal—I trust you'll allow that."

"Equality—damn it, I suppose you'll take the command of the ship. However, sir, your ignorance will be a little enlightened by and by. I shall now report your conduct

1. a domestic fowl (from Bantam, Java): then, an impudent fellow.

to the captain. If you are not on board this evening, I shall send a sergeant and a file of marines tomorrow morning, at daylight, to fetch you."

Jack replied that he would do the same, telling the captain that it would be very uncomfortable to remain in the same ship with such an ungentlemanly bear as the first-lieutenant. The astonishment of the other even mastered his anger, and he called Jack "mad." To which the latter replied that he was "a philosopher."

"A *what?*" exclaimed Sawbridge: "what next? Well, my joker, I shall put your philosophy to the proof."

"It is for that very reason, sir," replied Jack, "that I have decided upon going to sea: and if you do remain on board, I hope to argue the point with you, and make you a convert to the truth of equality and the rights of man."

"By the Lord, I'll soon make you a convert to the thirty-six articles of war—that is, if you remain on board. I shall now go to the captain, sir, and leave you to your dinner with what appetite you may."

"Sir, I am very much obliged to you: but you need not be afraid of my appetite. I am only sorry that I cannot, in justice to the gentlemanly young men whom I expect, ask you to join them. Good morning, sir."

"Twenty years have I been in service," roared Sawbridge, "and, damme,—but he is mad—downright, stark, staring mad." And he bounced out of the room.

Jack was a little astonished himself. Shortly afterwards, the company arrived, and Jack soon forgot all about it.

In the meantime, Sawbridge called at the captain's and made a faithful report of all that had happened, ending with a

demand for Jack's instant dismissal or a courtmartial<sup>1</sup> on him.

"Stop, Sawbridge," replied the captain; "take a chair. As Mr Easy says, we must argue the point, and then I will leave it to your better feelings."

Then Captain Wilson told him that Jack could not be courtmartialled for two reasons: first, he had not yet joined the ship, and secondly, he could not know Sawbridge to be an officer as he was not in uniform.

Regarding his dismissal, the captain put before his first-lieutenant Jack's utter ignorance of the navy and its discipline, as shown by his treatment of Sawbridge. Then he told Sawbridge of the eccentric father and the debt of gratitude he owed to the latter, though he never thought that his only son, heir to a large fortune, would ever have cared to enter the navy. But he having done so, was it not his duty to do what he could to protect him in the service he had chosen to enter from a whim? He ended by appealing to Sawbridge, as a man and as an officer, as well as an old friend, to judge for him.

Sawbridge did not disappoint him, and assured him he would forget what had passed and do all in his power to help the lad to grow sane.

The captain now said, "I will send a note, requesting Jack to breakfast with me tomorrow morning. I do not wish to frighten him, now I wish to keep him if I possibly can."

"You are right, sir; his father is his greatest enemy. Then, sir, I shall leave the whole affair in your hands."

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1. trial at a court of naval (or military) officers.

“Do, Sawbridge; you have obliged me very much by your kindness in this business.”

Sawbridge then took his leave, and Captain Wilson sent a note to Jack, requesting the pleasure of his company to breakfast at nine the next morning. The answer was in the affirmative, but verbal, for Jack had drunk too much champagne to trust his pen to paper.

Jack was reminded of his engagement with the captain by the waiter, and he set off, in his uniform, for the captain's lodgings.

Captain Wilson received him as if he were ignorant of all that had happened, but Jack himself narrated the affair briefly before breakfast was over. The captain then explained to Jack the duties and rank of every person on board the ship. He pointed out that only one could command where discipline was required, and that that one was the captain who represented the king, who represented the country. The orders of the captain all were *equally* obliged to obey. Indeed, as the captain himself had to obey the orders of his superiors, *all* on board might be said to be equally obliged to obey. Captain Wilson, while explaining to Jack that he was entering a service in which *equality* could never for a moment exist, if the service was to exist, contrived to show that all the grades were levelled by all being equally bound to do their duty to their country.

Jack did not altogether dislike this view of the subject. In short, the captain, who told the truth and nothing but the truth, without telling the whole truth, made Jack fancy that he had at last found that equality he had been seeking for in vain on shore. But presently he recollected the language of Mr Sawbridge which was very much at variance



with equality, and asked the captain why he had so conducted himself. Sawbridge, as the senior officer on board, only did his duty in pointing out Jack's error, and if he did it in strong language, it only proved his zeal for his country.

"Upon my honour," replied Jack, "there can be no doubt of his zeal; for if the whole country had been at stake, he could not have put himself in greater passion."

"All zeal, Mr Easy. You will, I am sure, find Mr Sawbridge one of your best friends."

"Perhaps so," replied Jack: "but I did not much admire our first acquaintance."

"It will perhaps be your unpleasant duty to find as much fault yourself; we are all equally bound to do our duty to our country. But, Mr Easy, I sent for you to say that we shall sail tomorrow: and, as I shall send my things off this afternoon, you had better send yours also. At eight o'clock I shall go on board, and we can both go in the same boat."

To this Jack made no objection, and by nine o'clock that evening Jack was safe on board his Majesty's sloop *Harpy*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW JACK VIOLATES HIS OWN PHILOSOPHY

JACK appeared on deck after four days of severe sea-sickness, and dined with the captain in the cabin, when, at the end of the dinner, he had an opportunity of talking on his favourite topic. All the company stared with surprise at hearing such a doctrine on board a man-of-war and were equally astonished at the cool, good-humoured ridicule with which it was received by Captain Wilson. The report of Jack's

boldness was soon circulated (of course much magnified) through the whole ship: it was discussed by the officers in the gun-room and by the midshipmen as they walked the deck. It was the general opinion of the ship's company that, as soon as they arrived at Gibraltar Bay, he would be either court-martialled or dismissed. But others, who had been informed by Sawbridge of our hero being heir to a large fortune, argued differently and considered that the captain had very good reasons for being so lenient—and among them was the second lieutenant. There were but four who were well inclined towards Jack—to wit, the captain, the first lieutenant, Mr Jolliffe, the one-eyed master's mate, and Mephistopheles,<sup>1</sup> the black, who, having heard that Jack had uttered such sentiments, loved him with all his heart and soul.

We have referred to the second lieutenant, Mr Asper. This young man had a very high respect for birth, and particularly for money of which he had very little. Now, as he knew that our hero was well supplied with money, he had been waiting for Jack's appearance on deck to become his very dearest and most intimate friend. The conversation in the cabin made him feel assured that Jack would require and be grateful for support, and he had taken the opportunity of a walk with Mr Sawbridge to offer to take Jack in his watch. The offer was accepted and Jack was ordered, as he now entered upon his duties, to keep watch under Lieutenant Asper.

This was also the first day in which Jack had entered the midshipman's berth and was made acquainted with his messmates. First came Mr Jolliffe, the master's mate, and

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1. shortened as 'Mesty' below.

nature had been particularly unkind to him, in that he should have an appearance at which the very dogs would bark. Tall, gaunt and thin, his face pitted with small-pox, with no eyebrows and only one eye with a sinister<sup>1</sup> expression, he seldom spoke in the berth. But all respected him and acknowledged his correct behaviour in every point, his sense of justice, his kindness and his good sense.

In all societies, however small they may be, you will invariably meet with a bully: and generally also you will find one of that society who is more or less the butt. In a midshipman's berth this fact has become almost proverbial, although now perhaps it is not attended with that disagreeable despotism which was permitted at the time our hero entered the service.

The bully of the midshipman's berth here was a young man named Vigors, about seventeen, the son of the clerk in the dockyard at Plymouth. The butt was a pudding-face boy of fifteen, whose intellects might have been respectable, had he not lost all confidence in his own powers from the constant jeers and mockeries of others. His name was Gossètt, the son of a wealthy yeoman of Norfolk. There were three other midshipmen in the ship, of whom it can be said that they were like midshipmen in general, with little appetite for learning, but good appetites for dinner, hating work, fond of fun, bitter foes one minute, and sworn friends the next—with general principles of honour and justice, occasionally warped<sup>2</sup> according to circumstances. Their names were O'Connor, Mills and Gascoigne.

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1. malignant; showing evil or wickedness.
  2. made (or become) crooked (or perverted).

"I say, Easy," said Gascoigne, "you are a devilish free and easy sort of a fellow to tell the captain that you considered yourself as great a man as he was."

"I beg your pardon," replied Jack, "I did not argue individually, but generally upon the principles of the rights of man."

"Well," replied Gascoigne, "it's the first time I ever heard a middy<sup>1</sup> do such a thing; take care your rights of man don't get you in the wrong box--there's no arguing on board of a man-of-war."

Jolliffe agreed with Gascoigne. "Man is a free agent," said Jack.

"I'll be shot if a midshipman is," replied Gascoigne, "and that you'll soon find."

"And yet it was by the expectation of finding that equality that I was induced to come to sea."

"On the first of April<sup>2</sup> I presume," replied Gascoigne. Now Jack entered into a long argument, to which they listened, and Mesty with admiration.

Jolliffe advised him to keep his opinions to himself as much as possible. Just then came in Vigors and O'Connor Jolliffe introduced them to Jack, who acknowledged it with politeness. Vigors did not return the greeting, and, thinking that he had somebody else to bully, began:

"So, my chap, you are come on board to raise a mutiny here with your equality--you came off scot-free at the captain's table: but it won't do, I can tell you, in the midshipman's berth: some must knock under, and you are one of them."

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1. short for 'midshipman.'

2. called "All Fools' Day."

"Am I then to infer that I am not on an equality with my messmates?" replied Jack, looking at Jolliffe. Vigors answered:

"Yes, you have an equal right to the berth, if you are **not** knocked out of it for insolence to your masters; you have an equal right to pay for the things purchased for the mess and to have your share, provided you can get it; you have an equal right to talk, provided you are not told to hold your tongue. The fact is, the weakest goes to the wall, and that is midshipman's berth equality."

"I am then to infer that here the only law is club law."

"You are right for once," replied Vigors. "Well, then, a nod's is as good as a wink to a blind horse, that's all."

Just then they were called up on duty, but Jack, who had not yet received orders to join duty, remained below with Mesty.

"By the powers," said Mesty, "I love you with my whole soul. You really talk fine, Master Easy; that Mr Vigors--never care for him, wouldn't you lick him--sure you would."

"I've thrashed bigger fellows than he," said Jack; and that was true. Mr Bonnycastle never interfered in a fair fight, provided the lessons were well said. Jack had fought and fought again, until he was a very good bruiser.

"Vigors and the other midshipmen, their duties over, now returned to the berth. When on deck, Vigors talked of bringing Jack to his senses, and as he was strongest in the berth except Jolliffe, the others came down to see the fun.

"Well, Mr Easy," said Vigors, as he came into the berth, "you take after your name, at all events; I suppose you intend to eat the king's provision, and do nothing."

Jack's mettle was up, and he said, "You will oblige me, sir, by minding your own business."

"You impudent blackguard, if you say another word I'll give you a good thrashing, and knock some of your equality out of you "

"Indeed," replied Jack, who almost fancied himself at Mr Bonnycastle's; "we'll try that."

Whereupon Jack very coolly divested himself of his upper garments, neckerchief and shirt, much to the surprise of Vigors, who little contemplated such a proof of decision and confidence, and still more to the delight of the other midshipmen who wished to see Vigors well thrashed. Vigors, seeing he had gone too far to retreat, prepared for action; and the whole party went out into the steerage<sup>1</sup> to settle the business.

Vigors had gained his assumed authority more by bullying than fighting; others had submitted to him without a sufficient trial. Jack, on the contrary, had won his way up in school by hard and scientific combat: the result, therefore, may be easily imagined. In less than quarter of an hour Vigors, beaten dead, with his eyes closed, and three teeth out, gave in; while Jack, but for a few trifling scratches, looked as fresh as ever. The news of this victory was soon through the ship; and before Jack had resumed his clothes, it had been told confidentially by Sawbridge to the captain.

"So soon!" said the captain laughing. "This victory is the first severe blow to Mr Easy's equality, and will be more valuable than twenty defeats. Let him now go to his duty: he will soon find his level."

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1. quarters of junior officers, etc.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HOW JACK PROVES THAT ALL ON BOARD SHOULD EQUALLY SACRIFICE DECENCY TO DUTY

The success of any young man in a profession very much depends upon the occurrences at the commencement of his career, as from those his character is judged and he is treated accordingly. Jack entered the service at a much later period than most lads. He was tall and manly for his age, and his countenance, if not strictly handsome, wore that expression of honesty and boldness which is sure to please. His spirit, in not submitting to and meeting Vigors when he had hardly recovered from his severe seasickness, had gained respect with the many, and with all except his foe and Mr Smallsole, goodwill.

And Jack made the best use he could of his strength, and became, as it were, the champion of those, who, although much longer at sea, were glad to shelter themselves under his courage and skill, which excited the admiration of the butcher of the ship, who had been a professional pugilist. Thus did Jack at once take the rank of an oldster, and soon became the leader of all the mischief.

Mr Asper, for his own reasons, made him his companion; they walked the night-watch together, and he listened to all the nonsense of Jack about the rights of man. He cautioned Jack, though he appeared to agree with him to gain his favour. Of course they were good friends, especially as Mr Asper would send Jack down to bed, when half the watch was over, to conciliate his goodwill and to get rid of his eternal arguing.

They were now entering the Straits and expecting to anchor the next day at Gibraltar. Jack and Mesty were

on the forecastle, talking, and there was nothing that Mesty would not have done for Jack. This was natural.

Mesty was a negro, carried off as a slave to America and escaping from there to England, became free. According to him, he had been a great man in his own country. He found popular feeling was strong against his colour, and on board a man-of-war he was condemned to the humblest of offices, to ‘boil the kettle for the young gentlemen.’ When, therefore, he heard sentiments of liberty and equality, falling from Jack’s lips, feelings which *now* beat in his own heart—we say *now*, for in his own country he had no ideas of equality; no one has who is in power—he took a great fondness for Jack, who also liked the black and would often talk with him on these ideas.

Jack’s conversation with Mesty was interrupted by the voice of the boatswain<sup>1</sup> who said to his boy: “It’s now ten minutes, sir, by my repeater, that I have sent for you;” and Mr Biggs pulled out a huge silver watch, which he always called a repeater.

“If you please,” said the boy, “I was changing my trousers when you sent for me.”

“Silence, sir; I’d have you know that, when you are sent for by your officer, trousers or no trousers, it is your duty to come up directly.”

“Without trousers, sir!”

“Yes, sir, without trousers: if the captain required me, I should come without my shirt. Duty before decency, So saying the boatswain laid hold of the boy.

“Surely, Mr Biggs,” said Jack, “you are not going to punish that boy for not coming up without his trousers!”

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1. pron. bosn : ship’s officer in charge of sails, etc.



“Yes, Mr Easy, I am—I must teach him a lesson. We are bound, now that new-fangled ideas are brought into the ship, to uphold the dignity of the service; and the orders of an officer are not to be delayed ten minutes and twenty seconds, because a boy has no trousers on.” Whereupon Biggs administered several smart cuts with his rattan upon the boy.

The next day the *Harpy* was at anchor in Gibraltar Bay. There happened to be a ball given by the officers of the garrison on that evening, and a polite invitation was sent to the officers of the *Harpy*. As those who accepted the invitation would be detained late, it was not possible for them to come off that night. And as their services were required for the next day, Captain Wilson allowed them to remain on shore until seven o'clock the next morning, at which hour two boats would be sent for them.

Mr Asper obtained leave and asked permission to take our hero with him. Many other officers, including the boatswain, obtained leave. Asper and Jack went to an inn, dined, bespoke<sup>1</sup> beds, and then repaired to the ball. Before they returned to the inn, Jack had an amusing accident which had wetted his trousers.

The inn was crowded and the landlord obliged to put Jack into a double-bedded room. The other was heavily snoring. As he undressed he recollected his wet trousers, and, opening the window, hung them out and then jammed down the window again upon them to hold them in position; after which he turned in and fell fast asleep. When he was called at six o'clock in the morning, he found the window thrown open and his trousers missing. His partner

1. = engaged beforehand.

in the room should have thrown the window open in the night and he had lost his trousers. He drew near the other bed and found that he was no other than Biggs. He put on the trousers of Biggs, thinking he should like to see Biggs obeying orders without trousers, and with Asper returned to the ship in the first boat. He changed his trousers and, unseen by any one, put them on a chair in Biggs's cabin, and waited on deck to see the issue of the affair.

The boatswain was wakened and, being late, hastened to dress himself. Not finding the trousers, he rang the bell. In the meantime, he put on everything else, and when the waiter came, he denied all knowledge of them. He had come tipsy, the window had been open at the time, he must have thrown them out of the window. Such was the waiter's opinion. Time flew and the boatswain was in despair. “Could they lend him a pair?”

The landlord knew the difference of rank between officers. He sent up the bill by the waiter and stated that, for a deposit, the officer might have a pair of trousers. The latter felt in his pockets and remembered that all his money was in his trousers' pocket. He could not even pay his bill. It was bad enough, the landlord said, to lose his money, but he could not lose more.

“I shall be court-martialled, by heavens!” cried the boatswain. “It's not far from the sally-port; I'll make a run for it, and can slip into one of the boats, and get another pair of trousers before I report myself as having come on board.”

So with his shirt tails streaming in the wind, he ran as hard as he could, jeered at by many on the way. Arriving breathless at the goal, he jumped into the boat and squat-

ted<sup>1</sup> on the stern sheets, much to the surprise of the officers and men who thought him mad. When he told him the story, they were all convulsed with laughter. He looked round, and seeing a boat-cloak which belonged to Gascoigne, he requested him to lend it to him.

“Indeed I will not,” replied Gascoigne. “Remember what you said when I wanted a fishing-line off Cape St Vincent. You said you would see me d——d first. Now I say the same to you, before you have my boat-cloak.”

Gascoigne rolled up his cloak, as soon as the boat reached the side of the ship and threw it up; and the first lieutenant was standing, looking down into the boat, and Captain Wilson walking the quarter deck.

“Come, Mr Biggs,” said Mr Sawbridge, “I expected you off in the first boat; be as smart as you please, for the yards are not yet squared.<sup>2</sup>”

“Shall I go ahead in this boat and square them, sir?”

“That boat, no: jump up here. What the devil do you sit there for? Are you sober, sir?”

This decided Mr Biggs. He sprang up from the boat, and touched his hat to the first-lieutenant as he passed him.

“Perfectly sober, sir, but I have lost my trousers.”

“So it appears, sir,” said Sawbridge who, unable to contain himself, ran down the ship ladder to the quarter deck, choked with laughter.

The conversation attracted the notice of all. “What’s all this?” said the captain, coming to the gangway.<sup>3</sup>

1. sat with knees drawn up and heels close to hams.

2. laid at right angles with the keel: a sailors’ term.

3. passage, etc. on a ship, esp. platform connecting quarterdeck and fore-castle.



"Duty before decency"

"Duty before decency," replied Jack, who stood by, enjoying the joke.

Mr Biggs recollected the day before—he cast a furious look at Jack, as he touched his hat to the captain and dived down to the lower deck. If anything could add to the indignation of Biggs, it was to find his trousers had come on board before him. He now felt that a trick had been played on him and that by Jack; but he could prove nothing.

When the story was known to all the ship, 'duty before decency' became a byword.<sup>1</sup> The boatswain was as unpopular with the men as Vigers, and Jack became a great favourite with the seamen, who gave him the sobriquet<sup>2</sup> of *Equality Jack*.

## CHAPTER X

### IN WHICH JACK SHOWS HIS 'ZEAL' IN HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE

THE next day being Sunday, and the weather not being favourable, the articles of war were read out to the men instead of the service.<sup>3</sup> Jack, who had been told by the captain that these articles of war were the rules and regulations of the service, by which the captain and others were equally bound, listened to them with the greatest attention. He little thought that there were about five hundred orders from the admiralty, tacked<sup>4</sup> on to them, which contained the most important matter and to a certain extent made them inoperative.

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1. a common or proverbial saying.
  2. a nickname.
  3. divine worship.
  4. fastened appended; added.

To make himself sure he begged the clerk to let him have a copy of the articles of war. This was given in exchange for a worn-out tooth-brush, of which the clerk was in urgent need ; and Jack mastered its contents.

One morning Jack went down in the berth, and found young Gossett blubbering<sup>1</sup> because of a recent thrashing from Vigers.

“What for ?” asked Jack.

“Because he says the service is going to hell and that all subordination is destroyed and that upstarts join the ship who, because they have a five-pound note in their pocket, are allowed to do just as they please. He said he was determined to uphold the service, and then he knocked me down, and then he took out his colt,<sup>2</sup> and colted me for half an hour.”

“By the soul of my father,” said Mesty, “but it is all true, Master Easy : all for nothing, bad luck to him. He has a devilish bad memory—and he wants a little more of Equality Jack.”

“And he shall have it too,” replied our hero. “Why, it is against the articles of war, ‘all quarrelling, fighting, etc.’”

“Will you do what I tell you next time, and trust to me for protection ?” Jack asked Gossett.

“I don’t care what I do,” replied the boy, “if you will back me against the cowardly tyrant.”

“Do you refer to me ?” cried Vigers, who had stopped at the door of the berth.

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1. weeping noisily.

2. rope used for punishment : (a sea term) : verb from this.

"Say yes," said Jack.

"Yes, I do," cried Gossett.

"You do, do you? Well then, my chick, I must trouble you with a little more of this," said Vigors, drawing out his colt.

"I think you had better not, Mr Vigors," observed Jack.

"Mind your own business, if you please," returned Vigors. "I am not addressing my conversation to you. I presume I have a right to choose my own acquaintance, and depend upon it, it will not be that of a leveller."

"All that is at your pleasure, Mr Vigors," replied Jack. "I too have a right to choose my own friends, and further to support them. That lad is my friend, Mr Vigors."

"Then," replied Vigors, who could not help bullying even at the risk of another fight with Jack, "I shall take the liberty of giving your friend a thrashing;" and he suited the action to the word.

"Then I shall take the liberty to defend my friend," replied Jack; "and as you call me a leveller, I'll try if I may not deserve the name."

Saying this, he placed a blow so well under the ear that Vigors dropped on the deck. "And now, youngster," said Jack, wresting the colt from the hand of Vigors, "do as I bid you—give him a good colting—if you don't, I'll thrash you."

Gossett required no second threat—the pleasure of thrashing his enemy, if only for once, was quite enough—and he laid well on. Jack, with his fists doubled, was ready to protect him if there was a show of resistance, but Vigors was half stupefied with the blow under the ear and

was quite cowed: he took his thrashing in the most passive manner.

"That will do," said Jack, "and do not be afraid, Gossett; the very first time he offers to strike you in my absence, I will pay him off for it as soon as you tell me. I won't be called Equality Jack for nothing."

When Jolliffe, who heard of this, met our hero alone, he said to him, "Take my advice, boy, and do not in future fight the battles of others, for you'll find very soon that you will have enough to do to fight your own."

Whereupon Jack argued the point for half an hour, and then they separated. But Jolliffe was right. Jack began to find himself constantly in hot water, and the captain and the first-lieutenant thought it high time to warn that Jack should find out that, on board a man-of-war, everybody and everything should find its level.

There was a man of the name of Easthupp who did the duty of purser's steward. He had been one of the swell mob—a gentleman pickpocket—and somehow managed to enter the service. A remarkable neat dresser, for that was part of his profession; a smooth manner; a great fluency of language although he clipped<sup>1</sup> the King's English; and, as he had suffered more than once by the law, it is not to be wondered at that he was, as he called himself, a *hout-and-hout* radical.

Now, when Easthupp heard of Jack's opinions, he wished to cultivate his acquaintance, and with a bow introduced himself before they arrived at Gibraltar; but our hero took an instinctive dislike to this fellow from his excessive and impertinent familiarity.

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1. omitted letters or syllables (of words).



Jack knew a gentleman when he met one, and did not choose to be a companion to one beneath him in every way, but who, upon the strength of Jack's opinions, presumed to be his equal. Jack's equality did not go so far as that; in theory it was all very well, but in practice it was only when it suited his own purpose.

But the purser's steward was not to be checked; and although Jack would plainly show him that his company was not agreeable, Easthupp would constantly accost him familiarly on the fore-castle and lower deck, with his arms folded, and with an air almost amounting to superiority. At last, Jack told him to go about his business and not to presume to talk to him, whereupon Easthupp rejoined, and it ended by Jack kicking him. This was but a sorry specimen of Jack's equality; and Easthupp went up to the captain on the quarter-deck and lodged his complaint. The captain desired that Jack might be summoned.

When he made his appearance, the purser's steward said, "If you please, Captain Vilson, I am very sorry to be obliged to make hany complaint of hany officer, but this Mr. Heasy thought proper to make use of language quite hunbecoming of a gentleman, and then to kick me as I vent down the atchway.<sup>1</sup>"

"Well, Mr Easy, is this true?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack; "I have several times told the fellow not to address himself to me, and he will. I did tell him he was a radical blackguard, and I did kick him down the hatchway."

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1. for 'hatchway': opening in deck for lowering cargo. Note the dropping and insertion of *h*—a mark of vulgarity.

"You told him he was a radical blackguard, Mr Easy?"

"Yes, sir; he comes bothering me about his republic, and asserting that we have no want of a king and aristocracy."

Captain Wilson looked significantly at Mr Sawbridge.

"I certainly did offer my political opinions; but you must be aware that we shall have an equal stake in the country—and it's a Hinglishman's birthright."

"I'm not aware what your stake may be in the country, Mr Easthupp," observed Captain Wilson, "but I think that, if you used such expressions, Mr Easy was fully warranted in telling you his opinion."

"I am willing, Captain Wilson, to make many allowances for the sake of political discussion—but that is not all. Mr Heasy thought proper to say that I was a swindler and liar."

"Did you make use of such expressions, Mr Easy?"

"Yes, sir, he did," continued the steward, "and told me not to cheat the men and my master the purser. Now, Captain Wilson, I flatter myself that I have been well educated and was once moving in a very different society—misfortunes<sup>2</sup> will happen<sup>3</sup> to all, and I feel my character has been severely injured. I told Mr Heasy that I considered myself quite as much of a gentleman as himself, and at all events<sup>4</sup> did not keep company with a black feller, whereupon Mr Heasy thought proper to kick me down the hatchway."

"Very well, steward, I have heard your complaint, and now you may go."

1. heat.

3. 'happen.'

2. 'misfortunes.'

4. 'at all events.'

Easthupp departed ; and the captain told Jack that, though he would not say anything about his calling him a radical blackguard, he had no right to call him a cheat, especially as he was in a position of trust, and asked him why he had done so.

Now Jack had no proofs against the man and no excuse to offer : but he recollected presently the reason assigned by the captain for the language used by Sawbridge. So he replied very quietly and respectfully : " If you please, that was all zeal. "

" Zeal, Mr Easy ? I think it but a bad excuse. But pray, then, why did you kick the man down the hatchway ? You must have known that that was contrary to the rules of the service. "

" Yes, sir, " replied Jack demurely,<sup>1</sup> " but that was all zeal too. "

" Then allow me to say, " replied the captain, biting his lips, " that I think your zeal has been very much misplaced, and I trust you will not show so much again. You may go now. "

Captain Wilson, after Jack's departure, laughed heartily, and told Sawbridge his explanation of the latter's language to Jack. " He has very cleverly given me it all back again ; and really, Sawbridge, as it proves how weak was my defence of you, you may gain from this a lesson. "

## CHAPTER XI

### IN WHICH JACK MAKES A CRUISE WITH IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES

THE *Harpy* was soon under way, and made all sail, steering for Cape de Gatte, where Captain Wilson hoped to pick up a Spanish vessel or two, on his way to Toulon to receive

1. i.e. with affected calm or gravity.

the orders of the admiral. When she was off Tarragona, they received information that a small convoy<sup>1</sup> was coming down from Rosas under the protection of two gun-boats.

Allowing for the time that the convoy would take to run down the distance, Captain Wilson ordered the boats out with directions to proceed along the shore. Sawbridge had the command of the expedition in the pinnace;<sup>2</sup> the first cutter<sup>3</sup> was in charge of the gunner; and as the other officers were sick of dysentery, Jack was given the command of the second cutter with Mesty. One day's biscuit and rum were put on board each, that the crews might not suffer exhaustion. The boats coasted for three hours without seeing anything: the night was fine overhead. When they were within a mile of a low point, they saw the convoy coming down with their sails spread before a light breeze. Sawbridge immediately ordered the boats to lie upon their oars, awaiting their coming and arranging for the attack.

The white lateen<sup>4</sup> sails of the gun-boat in advance were now plainly distinguishable from the rest, which were all huddled together in her wake. They were taken by surprise, and though the resistance was trifling, the alarm was given for the rest. The other gun-boat now made her appearance and Sawbridge directed his boats to attack her. Finding that he was not supported, the officer commanding the gun-boat changed her course to windward and stood out in the offing.<sup>5</sup> Jack pulled after her, but did not

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1. number of merchant ships under escort.
  2. man-of-war's double-banked boat.
  3. boat belonging to a ship of war.
  4. triangular on long yard at 45° to mast.
  5. part of visible sea distant from shore or beyond anchoring point.

see the other boats. The breeze had freshened and all pursuit was useless. Jack therefore directed his course to the convoy and contrived to get on board of a one-masted xebeque<sup>1</sup> of about fifty tons. Mesty had seen that several of the convoy had not rounded the point, and he proposed that they should pretend to escape, and by that means manage to capture some others, if it fell calm Jack thought the advice good. He therefore stood out into the breeze, and had gained six or seven miles, when he perceived signals of recall, enforced with guns.

Mesty advised him to disobey the orders, so that they might make a cruise<sup>2</sup> and go to Toulon with some valuable prizes. Jack was not quite unwilling to do so. For he argued: "It's not often that one gets a command before being two months at sea, and, hang me, now I've got it if I won't keep it." The men also were agreeable to the plan. They felt certain that success would easily secure them a pardon for disobedience.

They could now see from where they were that the convoy with the gun-boat were followed by the *Harpy* under all sail.

Mesty now saw to windward and perceived a large vessel and a brig, about three miles from them, sailing for the protection of a battery not far distant.

Jack slackened sail, and kept out of sight till the night, when in the dark they could take them.

They must now proceed to business, for they had but their allowance of bread and grog for one day, and in the vessel they had captured they found nothing

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1. a small Mediterranean vessel.

2. sailing to and fro for plunder, &c.

but beans with which it was half full. There were only three prisoners on board who had been put down in the hold among the beans. They could have only bean-soup for dinner and all. The prisoners told their captors that the ship and the brig were valuable, and the ship carried guns. At sunset the vessels dropped their anchors off the battery, and the vessel which contained Jack and his fortunes was about four miles to leeward.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as it was dark, Jack turned his hands up and made a very long speech. He told them that his zeal had induced him not to return to the ship until he had brought something with him worth having, and that he trusted to their zeal to support him on this occasion. Then he made the necessary arrangements. Mesty's advice was approved; which was, that they should anchor not far ahead of the ship, and wait till about two o'clock in the morning, when they would drop silently down upon her in the cutter and take possession.

It fell out as planned. There was also a slight rain which helped them. The cutter was lowered and drawn under the bows of the ship. The men were soon upon the deck and found it deserted. The watch had neglected their duty and slept soundly. They were soon overpowered and gagged. Similarly the other men were made prisoners. Mesty showed his cunning in capturing the captain who was a very strong man. There were two male and three female passengers, who were kept prisoners in the cabin. Of the latter one was very old and the other two were young and handsome; while of the two males one was old, and the other young, as old as Jack.

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1. direction or side away from wind: (× 'windward').

They now brought the xebeque alongside of the ship and transferred the Spanish prisoners to her hold among the beans. The captain, his steward, and the five passengers were detained. It was now daylight. The men put on the jackets and caps of the Spanish seamen.

They resolved to send the passengers and the captain to the xebeque in the evening and set sail. The old man was a Spanish nobleman, and the women were his wife and daughters and the lad his son. They were grateful to Jack for his kindness. Meanwhile the crew were making preparations for sailing, and the coxswain<sup>1</sup> examined the stores in the ship and found that there was enough, at least for three months, of water, wine, and provisions, besides luxuries for the cabin. All thoughts of taking any more prizes were abandoned, for their crew was weak even to manage the one they had taken, which was as large as the *Harpy*, carrying fourteen guns. A fine breeze sprang up and cutting the cable, as the anchor was too heavy, they made sail, the other vessels doing the same without suspicion. Before they did so, however, they had conveyed the passengers and the captain to the xebeque. After an hour Jack hauled his wind<sup>2</sup> for a cruise.

Now the crew seemed to think that there was nothing to do except to make merry. So they brought wine and drank themselves to sleep. The man at the helm soon felt sleepy and left the ship to herself. Fortunately the weather was fine, and she went round and round the compass during the best part of the night, within a mile of the Spanish coast. Had this happened at daylight, the suspi-

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1. pron. coks'n : ship's officer in charge of boat and crew.

2. brought ship round to sail closer to wind.

cions of the Spaniards would have been roused, and she recaptured easily. The men were now penitent, and the ship was steered along shore without rousing suspicions. They did what they could to steer her back to Gibraltar, running directly down the coast from point to point within about five miles' distance.

When they were nearly abreast of Carthage, a gale came on from the northward and drove them out of sight of land: and it blew for three days with great fury. The men were tired out and discontented. Mesty was Jack's sheet-anchor. The fourth day the gale moderated, but they had no idea where they were. Jack now began to see that a cruise at sea without a knowledge of navigation was a more risky thing than he had imagined. At daylight they perceived that they were close to some small islands and much closer to some rocks, against which the sea beat high, although the wind had subsided. Again the helm was put up and they narrowly escaped. The men, being tired out, proposed that they should rest there if they could find good anchorage. Jack had to consent. They came to in a small bay, between the islands. The seamen took the boat and pulled on shore without even asking for permission. In an hour they returned and came in a body before Jack.

The coxswain was spokesman. He said that they wished to have rest, that there were provisions for three months on board, and that they expected they would be allowed to take provisions and plenty of wine with them. Jack, seeing the men's determined manner, yielded with a good grace. They allowed him to detain the Spaniard<sup>1</sup> with him, as two hands would be required if they wanted anything from the

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1. steward and cook, detained in the prize.



ship Taking what they required for a long stay, not forgetting two pipes of wine out of the three, they pulled off in the boat with three cheers of derision. Jack stood at the gangway, took off his hat, and made them a polite bow.

## CHAPTER XII

### HOW JACK LEARNS SPANISH AND QUELLS A MUTINY

AFTER they were gone, Mesty said, "Our turn will come. It is lucky we didn't tell them about the dollars;" for they had found a large sum of money in the captain's cabin.

A narrow piece of salt pork had been left at the gangway; and Jack, without knowing why, tossed it overboard. Presently both of them saw a dark object rising under it: it was a ground shark, who swallowed it and disappeared.

"By the powers," said Mesty, "I have them—this will stop the mutiny."

The men, in the meantime, were busy making preparations all the day to camp out for a long period. As they were within hail of the ship, what they did could be easily seen. Towards evening all was noise and revelry. As time passed they were intoxicated, and Mesty turned to Jack with his bitter smile, saying, "Stop a little."

At last the noise grew fainter and soon all was silent. Now Mesty proposed that they should steal the cutter from the men, as the temper of drunken men could not be trusted: it might change and endanger even the lives of Jack and Mesty. This was done quickly. Jack and Mesty then went to bed, Mesty taking the precaution to lock the Spaniard within the cabin.

Just after breakfast, Jack and Mesty saw some of the men walking down to the beach to where the boat had been. The men then walked along the rocks till they were abreast of the ship, and asked Mesty to bring the boat ashore with a beaker of water. Mesty asked Jack to say No.

"Do you hear on board?" cried the coxswain: "send the boat immediately, or we'll cut the throats of every mother's son of you, by God!"

"I shall not send the boat," said Jack, who now thought Mesty was right.

"You won't—won't you?—then your doom's sealed," replied the man, walking up to the tent. In a short time all the seamen turned out of the tent, bringing with them four muskets which they had taken on shore with them. They came abreast of the ship and the coxswain asked again if they would not bring the boat on shore

"No" was again the answer.

The plan of the mutineers had been foreseen by the wily negro: it was to swim off to the boats which were riding astern, and to fire at him or Jack, if they attempted to haul them up alongside and defend them. Some of the men examined their priming and held the muskets at their hips all ready, with the muzzles towards the ship, while the coxswain and two men were throwing off their clothes.

"Stop, for God's sake," cried Jack. "The harbour is full of ground sharks—it is, upon my soul!" He was not believed: they thought it was a device to frighten them.

The coxswain sprang off the rock into the sea, and was followed by two other men: at the same moment a musket was discharged and the bullet whistled close to our hero's ear.

Mesty drew Jack from the gangway, who sank on the deck for a moment with feelings of agony. But he soon sprang up and was just in time to see the coxswain raise himself with a yell out of the sea and then disappear in a vortex<sup>1</sup> of his own blood. Mesty threw down the musket which he had in his hand in case the men should gain the boats, saying, "By the powers, that's no use now!"

Jack now covered his face with his hands. But the tragedy was now complete. The other men, who were in the water, had immediately turned and made for the shore; but before they could reach it, two more of those monsters had flown to the spot, and soon devoured them.

Jack groaned in agony.

The dreadful death of the three mutineers appeared to have a sensible effect upon their companions, who walked away with their heads down. They were now seen walking the island probably in search of that water which they required. At noon they returned to their tent, and soon afterwards were in a state of intoxication, hallooing and shouting as the day before. Towards evening they came, each with a vessel of water, to the beach, and threw the water up to show that they had found water, and went back, dancing, leaping, and kicking up their heels, to renew their revelry, which continued till after midnight.

The next day Jack had recovered from the shock and asked Mesty how all that was to end. It could be ended easily, but it was risky. It was to go on shore when they were all drunk and *spile*<sup>2</sup> the casks, letting the wine run out: then they would get sober pretty soon and ask pardon

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1. *mass* of whirling fluid.

2. *make a small hole in* : (from noun = a wooden peg).

and return to duty. So he said, "I think it right that they first come and ask to come on board before you take them—and, sir, I think it also right, as we are but two and they are five, that they first eat all their provisions—let them starve well, and then they come on board tame enough."

"At all events," said Jack, "the first advance must come from them. I wish I had something to do."

"Master, why do you not talk with Pedro?"

"Because I cannot speak Spanish."

"I know that, and that's why I ask the question. You were very sorry when you met the two pretty women in the ship, because you were not able to talk with them—I guessed that."

"I was very sorry, I grant," replied Jack.

"Well, Master Easy, by-and-by we shall see more Spanish girls. Why not talk all day with Pedro? Then you may be able to talk with them."

"Upon my word, Mesty, I never had an idea of your value. I will learn all the Spanish that I can," replied Jack, who was glad to have employment found for him.

As for the men on shore, they continued the same course, though their fuel seemed to have become scarce; and the weather was now becoming cold. Jack learnt Spanish from Pedro for a month. Gradually the men seemed to have almost forgotten that the ship was there, for they took no notice of her whatever.

On the other hand, Jack had decided that they must make the first advance, even if he were to wait a year for it; and meanwhile he went on quietly with his Spanish, and two months passed thus.

One evening Jack saw that the tent on shore was in flames.

"I think these cold nights cool their courage anyhow," observed Mesty. "Master Easy, you see they soon ask permission to come on board."

Jack thought so too, and was most anxious to be off, for he had found a chart of the Mediterranean in one of the lookers<sup>1</sup> of the state-room in the cabin and had studied it very attentively. Making certain calculations, he said, "There, that is the way to Gibraltar, and as soon as the mutiny is quelled, and the wind is fair, I'll be off."

A few more days passed, and as was expected, the mutineers could hold out no longer. Their wine had run out by their own carelessness; their fuel had long ago gone and they had latterly eaten their meat raw; and the loss of their tent, by their carelessness again, had been followed by four days and nights of continual rain. They were worn out, shivering with cold and starving. Hanging they thought better than dying by inches from starvation. So they came down to the beach, abreast of the ship and dropped down on their knees.

"Ship ahoy!<sup>2</sup>" cried one of the men.

"What do you want?" asked Jack.

"Have pity on us, sir—mercy!" exclaimed the other men; "we will return to our duty."

Mesty advised Jack to say no first. "I cannot take mutineers on board," replied Jack.

"Well, then, our blood be on your hands, Mr Easy," replied the first man who had spoken. "If we are to die,

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1. small cupboards.

2. seaman's call in hailing.

it must not be by inches—if you will not take us, the sharks shall—it is but a crunch,<sup>1</sup> and all is over. What do you say, lads? let's all rush in together: good-bye, Mr Easy: it was all that rascal Johnson, the coxswain, who persuaded us. Come, my lads, let us shake hands and then make one run of it."

They shook hands all round, and then walking a few yards from the beach, stood in a line, while the man gave the signal—one—two.

"Stop," cried Jack, who had not forgotten the dreadful scene which had already taken place, "stop!"

The men paused.

"What will you promise if I take you on board?"

"To do our duty cheerfully till we join the ship, and then be hung as an example to all mutineers," replied the men.

"That's very fair," said Mesty; "take them at their word, Master Easy."

"Very well," replied Jack, "I accept your conditions; and we will come for you."

Jack and Mesty stuck their pistols in their belts, hauled up the boat and pulled to the shore. The men, as they stepped in, touched their hats respectfully to Jack, but said nothing. On their arrival on board Jack read that part of the articles of war relative to mutiny and then made a speech which seemed, to starving men, interminable. Then Mesty gave them some biscuit which they devoured thankfully.

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1. sound made by chewing food, &c.

## CHAPTER XIII

### IN WHICH JACK'S CRUISE IS ENDED AND HE REJOINS THE HARPY

THE next morning the wind was fair and they set sail. The men appeared very penitent, worked well, but in silence, for they had no very pleasant anticipations. But hope always remains with us; and each of the men, although he had no doubt that the others would be hung, hoped he would escape with a sound flogging. Before night the wind became contrary. The next morning they found themselves with a very light breeze under a high cape, and, as the sun rose, they observed a large vessel inshore<sup>1</sup> about two miles to the west and another outside about four miles off. Mesty took the glass and examined, the one outside, which was now running for the shore steering for the cape under which Jack's vessel lay. Mesty put down the glass and said that it looked like the *Harpy*.

One of the seamen now examined her with the glass and confirmed Mesty. "O Mr Easy, will you forgive us?" continued the man, and he and the others fell on their knees. "Do not tell all, for God's sake, Mr Easy."

Jack's heart melted; he looked at Mesty. "I think," said he to our hero, "that with what they have suffered already, suppose they get seven dozen apiece—that's quite enough."

Jack thought that even half that punishment would suffice: so he told the men that, though he must state what had occurred, he would not tell all and would manage to get them off as well as he could. Just then a gun from the

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1. close to shore.

*Harpy*, which had come up within range, put an end to what he meant to be a speech. The other vessel showed Spanish colours and fired a gun.

"By the powers," said Mesty, "we are caught between the two. The *Harpy* thinks us Spaniard. Now, my lads, get all the guns ready. Master, now let us fire at the Spaniard—*Harpy* will not fire at us. We do not have English colours on board—that's all we must do."

The men set to with a will. Now it fell calm. The *Harpy* was then about two miles from Jack's vessel and the Spaniard about a mile from him, with all her boats ahead of her, towing towards him.

"That's a man-of-war, Master Easy," said Mesty. "What can we do for a flag? We must hoist something."

Mesty ran down below, and soon reappeared with a silk petticoat, green with yellow and blue flowers—the property of the old lady who was in the vessel when they captured her.

"There, Master, that will do very well—that's what you call *all nation colour*: men never pull it down," Mesty continued. "Now then, hoist the colour, and fire away—mind you only fire one gun at a time, and point it well."

Meanwhile, on the *Harpy* they were discussing Jack's vessel, and seeing that she fired at the Spaniard came to the conclusion that she was a privateer.<sup>1</sup> This was lucky, for thus the Spaniard was prevented from escaping into the port of Carthage which lay on the other side of the cape.

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1. armed vessel owned by private persons and authorised by Government to attack ships of hostile nation.



When thus both the vessels attacked the Spanish vessel, suddenly Jack's vessel was fired at on the starboard<sup>1</sup> side by three gun-boats from Carthagena. There was now a fine breeze which helped Jack to escape the gun-boats; and the Spanish vessel, cut off by both the vessels, put her head the other way and tried to escape to the westward inshore along the coast. Meanwhile, the gun-boats wounded two of Jack's men. But presently he followed the *Harpy*, which chased the Spanish vessel, and in a short time was clear of the gun-boats. The Spaniard defended himself, and had the assistance of the batteries as he passed, but there was no anchorage until he had run many miles farther. At noon the wind died away, and the *Harpy* was within three cables' length of her enemy, engaging her and a battery of four guns. Jack had also come near, and was about half a mile from the Spaniard. Taking Mesty's advice, he did not fire any gun, as otherwise it would take away from the credit of the *Harpy*. At three o'clock the enemy surrendered, and the *Harpy*, sending a boat to take possession of her, soon silenced the batteries.

The *Harpy* was busy enough with the prize, shifting the prisoners and repairing the damages of both the vessels, and Jack's vessel, which had enabled them to capture the corvette,<sup>2</sup> was temporarily ignored. Jack also had good reasons to postpone reporting himself on board the *Harpy*. He had only four men to take care of his vessel, and must think out what he should say to excuse himself and in regard to the men. Tired by the

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1. right side of ship : (× larboard).

2. kind of war vessel with one tier of guns.

day's work and excitement, he fell asleep and did not wake till two hours after sunset; and Mesty, for his part, did not wake him, because he was in no hurry to 'boil the kettle for the young gentlemen.'

When Jack woke up, he at once had a boat lowered and soon reached the *Harpy*. No one noticed him in the dark. He ascended the side, and pushed his way through the prisoners, wrapped up in a cloak like that the latter wore. He was amused at not being recognised, and, slipping down the ladder, was going to the captain's cabin, when he heard young Gossett crying out and the sound of the thrashing. Jack went to the window of the berth, looked in, and cried out in an angry voice, "Mr Vigors, I'll thank you to leave Gossett alone." At the sound of the voice Vigors turned round with the colt in his hand, saw Jack's face, and thinking he saw a ghost, uttered a yell and fell down in a fit—little Gossett also trembling in every limb and staring with his mouth wide open. He soon disappeared, went to the cabin, entered it, where the captain was seated with two Spanish officers, took off his hat and said: "Come on board, Captain Wilson."

Captain Wilson did not fall down in a fit, but he jumped up and upset the glass before him.

"Merciful God! Mr Easy, where did you come from?"

"From that ship astern, sir," replied Jack.

"That ship astern! what is she? where have you been so long?"

"It's a long story, sir," replied Jack.

“ At all events, I'm delighted to see you, boy : now sit down and tell me your story in a few words ; we will have it in detail by and by.”

He did so. The captain rang the bell and asked Jolliffe to take possession of Jack's vessel, sending Jack with him.

## CHAPTER XIV

### IN WHICH JACK FINDS OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TRIGONOMETRY IN FIGHTING A DUEL

THIS happy blundering of Jack which enabled him to help the *Harpy* brought promotion to both the captain and Sawbridge, and he was in high favour with all. The men were let off with a reprimand in consideration of their subsequent good conduct, and Mesty, instead of 'boiling the kettle for the young gentlemen,' which he hated, was now the ship's corporal. The *Harpy* with the prizes was ordered to return to Malta, and here they in time arrived. And here Jack got into another scrape : it was a duel with the boatswain and the purser's steward.

It happened this way. One day Jack and Mesty were talking as usual on the forecastle, when Jack heard Biggs and Easthupp talking at him indirectly, which, however, could not be misunderstood. So Jack went up to the boatswain and challenged him. Biggs told him that Easthupp required satisfaction and Jack, if he were not afraid, might fight him. He replied that he would fight both at the same time to show Biggs that he was not afraid. Biggs accepted it.

Biggs chose, as his second, the gunner, Mr Tallboys, the new gunner. The latter felt ill-will towards Jack, because the latter excelled him in the science of navigation. He

was a peculiar character, with red hair and red whiskers. He had read a good deal, for he considered that the gunner was the most important personage in the ship. He had studied the *Art of Gunnery*, part of which he understood: but still he continued to read it as before, thinking that he should understand it by constant reading. He had read it forty times already and had begun reading it again. It was also his idea that a gunner should be a navigator, and he would say, "Now, sir, there's no excuse for a gunner not being a navigator, for he has the same mathematical tools to work with." So he had added the study of navigation to that on gunnery and advanced about as far in it as he had in gunnery, that is, to the threshold, where he stuck fast, with all his mathematical tools, which he did not know how to use. His head was confused with technical terms. His learning lay like lead upon his brain; the more he read, the less he understood; but he would always speak in technical language—mixing up sines and cosines, parabolas and tangents, and such like terms. Therefore when Jack met Tallboys, the latter would always start a discussion with a patronising air,—for Jack had just begun to study navigation,—which ended in a victory to Jack: hence the gunner's ill-will.

Jack requested Gascoigne to be his second. The time and place were appointed, and Jack and his friend, with Biggs, Easthupp and Tallboys, went on shore on the second day after their arrival at Malta and put up at one of the small inns to make the necessary arrangements.

Tallboys drew Gascoigne aside and said, "I have been very much puzzled how this duel should be fought, but I

have at last found it out. You see that there are *three* parties to fight; had there been two or four there would have been no difficulty, as the right line or square might guide us in that instance. But we must arrange it upon the *triangle* in this."

Gascoigne stared.

"Are you aware, Mr Gascoigne, of the properties of an equilateral triangle?"

"Yes," replied Gascoigne, "but what has it got to do with the duel?"

"Everything," replied the gunner; "it has resolved the great difficulty: indeed, the duel between three can only be fought upon that principle. You observe," continued the gunner, taking a piece of chalk out of his pocket and making a triangle upon the table, "in this figure we have three points, each equidistant from each other; and we have three combatants—so that placing one at each point, it is all fair play for the three."

"But then," replied Gascoigne, delighted at the idea, "how are they to fire?"

"It certainly is not of much consequence," replied the gunner; "but still, as sailors, it appears to me that they should fire with the sun; that is, Mr Easy fires at Mr Biggs, Mr Biggs at Mr Easthupp, and Mr Easthupp at Mr Easy, so that each party has his shot at one and at the same time receives the fire of another."

Gascoigne was in ecstasies at the novelty of the arrangement, the more so as he perceived that Easy obtained every advantage from it.

"Upon my word, Mr Tallboys, I give you great credit; you have a profound mathematical head. Of course, in

these affairs, the principals are bound to comply with the arrangements of the seconds, and I shall insist upon Mr Easy consenting to your excellent and scientific proposal."

Gascoigne went out and told Jack of the gunner's proposal, at which Jack laughed heartily. The gunner also explained it to the boatswain, who did not very well understand, but replied:

"I dare say it's all right—shot for shot, and d—n all favours."

The parties then repaired to the spot with two pairs of ship's pistols. Gascoigne measured an equilateral triangle of twelve paces, and marked it out. Tallboys found that it was 'equal angles subtended by equal sides,' and declared that it was all right. Easy took his station, Biggs was put into his, and Easthupp, who was in a mystery, was led by the gunner to the third position.

"But, Mr Tallboys," said the purser's steward, "I don't understand this. Mr Heasy will first fight Mr Biggs, will he not?"

"No," replied the gunner, "this is a duel of three. You will fire at Mr Easy, Mr Easy will fire at Mr Biggs who will fire at you. It is all arranged, Mr Easthupp."

"But," said Easthupp, "I do not understand it. Why is Mr Biggs to fire at me? I ave no quarrel with him."

"Because Mr Easy fires at Mr Biggs and Mr Biggs must have his shot as well."

"If you have ever been in the company of gentlemen, Mr Easthupp," observed Gascoigne, "you must know something about duelling."

"Yes, yes, I have kept the best company, Mr Gascoigne but—"

"Then, sir, if that is the case, you must know that your honour is in the hands of your second, and that no gentleman appeals."

"Yes, yes, I know that, Mr Gascoigne; but still I've no quarrel with Mr Biggs, and therefore, Mr Biggs, of course you vill not aim at me."

"Why, you don't think that I'm going to be fired at for nothing," replied the boatswain; "no, no, I'll have my shot anyhow."

"Vel, gentlemen, I protest against these proceedings," said Easthupp; "I came to ave satisfaction from Mr Heasy."

"Don't you have it when you fire at Mr Easy," replied the gunner; "what more would you have?"

"I protest against Mr Biggs firing at me."

"So you would have a shot without receiving one," cried Gascoigne: "the fact is, this fellow's a confounded coward, and ought to be kicked."

At this insult, Easthupp rallied and accepted the pistol offered by the gunner.

"You ear those words, Mr Biggs; pretty language to use to a gentleman. You shall ear from me, sir, as soon as the ship is paid off. I protest no longer; death before dishonour. I'm a gentleman, damme!"

At all events, Easthupp was not a very courageous gentleman, for he trembled as he pointed his pistol.

The gunner gave the word—"Take good aim—Fire!"

Soon after, Easthupp clapped his hand to his trousers behind, gave a loud yell, and then dropped down. Jack's shot had also taken effect, having passed through both the boatswain's cheeks. As for Easthupp's ball, as he was

very unsettled and shut his eyes before he fired, it had gone the Lord knows where.

The purser's steward lay on the ground and screamed—the boatswain spat two of his best upper double teeth and two or three mouthfuls of blood out.

“A pretty business this,” sputtered he; “he's put my pipe out. How on earth am I to pipe to dinner, all my wind escaping through my cheeks?”

In the meantime, they examined the purser's steward, and found his wound not to be very serious. So they asked him not to bawl out. When he continued bawling out, Tallboys cuffed him soundly. But he was in reality not able to walk, and the gunner went out to bring two men to help carry him to the hospital. Biggs, with his face bound up, came up to the purser's steward.

“What the hell are you making such a howling about? Look at me, I wish I could change with you, for I could use my whistle then. A wicked shot of yours, Mr Easy!”

“I am really very sorry,” replied Jack, with a polite bow, “and I offer my apology.”

During this conversation, Easthupp felt very faint and thought he was going to die.

“O dear! O dear! what a fool I was: I never was a gentleman—I shall die. I never will pick a pocket again—never—God forgive me!”

It was only then all knew for what he was; and he presently fainted away. Now came Tallboys with the men, and Easthupp was carried to the hospital, with Biggs following them for medical advice on his own account.

“Well, Easy,” said Gascoigne, “we're in a pretty scrape: there's no hushing this up. I'll be hanged if I care, it's the



best piece of fun I ever met with." And he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

They now reviewed their situation. They would not get any leave for the future, and would be confined on board the ship. This was hateful to both. Jack had money and they proposed to make another cruise, letting Jolliffe know that, as they were frightened by the death of Easthupp, they would remain in hiding till the whole thing was forgotten. "Then," continued Gascoigne, "let's go on board one of the speronares<sup>1</sup> which come with fruit from Sicily, sail in the night for Palermo, and when the money's all gone, we'll come back."

"That's a capital idea, Ned. I will write to the captain, begging him to get me off from being hung, and telling him where we have fled to, and that letter shall be given after we have sailed."

## CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH JACK MAKES ANOTHER CRUISE, FOLLOWS  
HIS DESTINY AND FINDS HIMSELF IN A  
DRAMATIC SITUATION

WHILE the captain and Sawbridge were laughing over the details of the duel, the two lads were speeding over the sea in a light boat to Sicily. There were three men in the boat, besides the boy who was put at the helm.

"What do you say, Jack—shall we keep watch to-night?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, I have been thinking the same thing—I don't much like the looks of the padrone<sup>2</sup>—he squints."

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1. small Mediterranean trading vessel.

2. master of Mediterranean trading-vessel.

“That’s no proof of anything, Jack; but if you do not like the look of him, I can tell you that he very much liked the look of your doubloons<sup>1</sup>—I saw him start, and his eyes twinkled, and I thought at the time it was a pity you had not paid him in dollars.”

“Well, if he wishes to take what he has seen, he shall receive what he has not seen (the pistols)—why, there are only four of them!”

“When shall we make the land?”

“Tomorrow evening with this wind. Suppose we keep watch and watch, and have our pistols ready with the great-coats just turned over them to keep them out of sight?”

“Agreed—it’s about twelve o’clock now—who shall keep the middle watch?”

“I will, Jack, if you like it.”

“Well, then, mind you kick me hard, for I sleep devilish sound.”

Jack was asleep in ten minutes; and Gascoigne sat up at the bottom of the boat, with his pistols ready for each hand.

There certainly is a peculiar providence in favour of midshipmen; they have more lives than a cat—always in the greatest danger, but always escaping from it.

The padrone, resolved to obtain the doubloons from Jack, was talking the matter over with his two men forward, and it was agreed that they should murder, rob, and throw them overboard.

About two in the morning, the padrone came aft<sup>2</sup> to see if the lads were asleep and found Gascoigne watching.

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1. Spanish gold coin, a little more than a £.

2. in or near stern of ship.

Tired of waiting and not supposing that they were armed, he went forward to the men, and Gascoigne saw them draw their knives. He pushed Jack, who woke immediately, and whispered his suspicions to him. Jack seized his pistols and both waited in silence, Jack still lying down. The padrone, followed by the two men, advanced without making noise, and raised their knives, when Gascoigne and Jack, almost at the same moment, fired at the padrone and one of the men, who both fell encumbering the lads with the weight of their bodies. Jack, without rising, took a steady aim with his second pistol at the third man, who fell. The boy at the helm also drew his knife and struck at Gascoigne from behind. It was luckily a slight wound, and when Gascoigne sprang up with his other pistol, the boy started back at the sight of it, lost his balance and fell overboard.

The two midshipmen took a few seconds to breathe. Then they threw the bodies overboard, Gascoigne took the helm, and Jack washed and swept the boat clean of all signs of the struggle. Jack now opened the locker and found something to eat and drink.

“So the padrone did keep his promise after all.”

“Yes, and had you not tempted him with the sight of so much gold, might now have been alive.”

“To which I reply, that if you had not advised our going off in a speronare, he would now have been alive.”

“And if you had not fought a duel, I should not have given the advice.”

“And if the boatswain had not been obliged to come on board without his trousers, at Gibraltar, I should not have fought a duel.”

“And if you had not joined the vessel, the boatswain would have had his trousers on.”

“And if my father had not been a philosopher, I should not have gone to sea; so that it is all my father’s fault, and he has killed four men without knowing it—cause and effect. After all, there’s nothing like argument; so having settled the point, let us go to dinner.”

Having finished their meal, Jack went forward and looked ahead. They steered the same course for three or four hours.

“The breeze freshens,” said Gascoigne; “I think we shall have a gale.”

“Pleasant—I know what it is to be short-handed in a gale; however, there’s one comfort, we shall not be blown off shore this time.”

The wind increased rapidly, and the sea got up; the sun went down, and they were obliged to run right for the land. The boat flew on the crest of the waves: the moon was already up, and the land was seen about five miles off, the coast appearing like a line of foam.

“At all events,” observed Jack, “they can’t accuse us of running away with the boat, for she’s running away with us.”

The rapidity with which the boat rushed to the beach was almost frightful. She darted like an arrow from wave to wave, and appeared to mock all their attempts to steer her. They were within a mile of the beach, when Jack, looking at the boiling foam on the coast, exclaimed:

“That’s very fine—very beautiful, upon my soul!”

“He cares for nothing,” thought Gascoigne, “he appears to have no idea of danger.” And he bade good-bye to his friend, for they might not meet again. They were nearing the rocks and soon might be dashed on them. But Jack did not lose heart, and taking the helm by force from his friend, asked him to direct his course from the bow. Gascoigne thought he could be more useful here, and was soon giving instructions to Jack.

It was lucky for them that they were thrown into a large cleft in a rock—nothing else could have saved them. As the water receded, the boat struck. Another wave followed, dashing her higher up and filling it with water. The bow of the boat was now several feet higher than the stern, where Jack held on. The boat now separated in the middle, and Jack required all his strength to maintain his hold on the yard which had swung fore and aft, until another wave floated him and dashed him higher up. When the wave receded, he walked and reached the rock. He climbed up the side and was helped by Gascoigne to reach the ledge<sup>1</sup> above.

“Well,” said Jack, shaking himself to get rid of the water, “I had no idea of anything like this. By-the-bye, now that it’s all over, you must see that I was right in taking the helm, and I beg to apologise for my rudeness.”

“You have saved my life,” replied Gascoigne “and no one but you would have thought of apologising for it.”

“Now, what shall we do?” said Jack. “Let us sit and down and argue the point.”

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1. shelf-like projection of rock.

“No, there will be too much cold water thrown upon our arguments—I'm half dead; let us walk on.”

“With all my heart,” replied Jack; “I can argue up hill or down hill, wet or dry—I'm used to it—for, as I told you before, Ned, my father is a philosopher, and so am I.”

“By the Lord, *you are*,” replied Gascoigne, as he walked on.

Climbing the precipice with toil, they descended—the change in the atmosphere was immediate. After a quarter of an hour's walk along a high-road, they saw the white walls of houses. Jack divided the money with his friend, and each armed with a pistol, they walked through the village. All the dogs of the village seemed to have joined together in giving them a noisy welcome. “There's a cart,” said Jack, “and it's full of straw—suppose we go to bed till tomorrow morning—we shall be warm at all events.”

“Yes,” replied Gascoigne, “and sleep much better than in any of the cottages. I have been in Sicily before, and you have no idea how the fleas bite.”

They at once climbed up into the cart and were soon fast asleep—so soundly that in about two hours the peasant, who had brought to the village some casks of wine to be shipped, yoked his bullocks and drove off without in any way disturbing their repose, although the roads in Sicily were not very smooth.

The jolting of the roads rather increased than disturbed the sleep of the adventurers, making them dream that they were again in the boat and that she was dashing against the rocks. In about two hours the cart arrived at its destination—the peasant unyoked the beasts and led them away. The same cause will often produce contrary



" In time to prev. nt a cold-blooded murder "

effects : the stopping of the cart disturbed the rest of Jack and his friend.

They turned round in the straw, yawned, and awoke. Jack then sat up and looked at Gascoigne. The forage was so high round them that they could not see above it ; they rubbed their eyes and looked at each other.

Gascoigne could talk Italian pretty well, and on his advice they tore their garments to look more wretched and replace them with the dress of the country and travel without exciting suspicion. They now stood up in the cart and looked about them. They saw hills on every side for at least a couple of miles. They were in an open space, used apparently for thrashing maize and the cart was standing under a clump of trees in the shade.

Being hungry, they got down from the cart and, going through the copse of wood, saw the wall of a large house on the other side. Just then they heard a woman screaming. They ran towards the house. As they advanced the screams redoubled ; they entered the porch, burst into the room from whence they proceeded, and found an elderly gentleman defending himself against two young men who were held back by an elderly and a young lady. The old gentleman had fallen down, and the two others were about to pierce him with their rapiers, when Jack and his friend burst into the room ; each seized one of the young men by the collar of his coat and presented the muzzle of the pistol to his ear. They were ordered to drop their swords which they did, and were given their liberty.

The elderly gentleman, who, like the rest, was astonished at the unexpected deliverance, now broke the silence



and, admonishing<sup>1</sup> his foes, dismissed them with contempt. These, recovering their swords, left the place without a word.

Now the old gentleman turned to Jack and his friend and thanked them. They told him who they were and how they had been wrecked in a boat when on a pleasure excursion.

The old gentleman was Don Rebiera de Silva, belonging to one of the noblest families in Sicily. The ladies were asked to get something ready for breakfast. After they were refreshed, Don Rebiera told Gascoigne his history, for he alone knew Italian, while Jack was left in charge of the ladies to be entertained. The young lady, Donna Agnes, had just returned from Spain, after a narrow escape from being captured by a young English officer, and thus knew Spanish; and Donna Clara, her mother, also knew some Spanish. Jack soon knew that Agnes was one of the two young ladies in the cabin of the ship he had captured.

They were in the garden and soon seated themselves in a pavilion<sup>2</sup> at the end of it. Agnes presently joined them and Jack, wishing to have some fun, observed that he was ashamed of his ragged clothes in such company. She politely replied that they did not mind such trifles.

"You are all kindness," replied Jack; "I little thought this morning of my good fortune—I can tell the fortunes of others, but not of my own."

The mother was glad when she heard of this gift of his, and he offered to tell her daughter her fortune. Agnes

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1. warning, reproving.

2. large tent or light ornamental building.

looked at him and smiled, as if she did not much regard it. Jack offered to prove his skill. Agnes extended her little hand and Jack, as if examining the lines, said :

“ I have learnt some particulars of you from your mother. I shall now be more particular. You were in a ship mounting fourteen guns—was it not so ? ”

Agnes nodded her head, and her mother added that she had not told him that.

Telling her about the capture of the ship, he added, “ The English officer was young, not very good-looking.”

Agnes said that he was very handsome.

“ There is no accounting for taste, signora ;<sup>1</sup> you were frightened out of your wits and crouched down in the corner of the cabin with your cousin. Let me examine that little line closer—you had—yes, it’s no mistake, you had very little clothes on.”

Agnes tore away her hand and covered her face, crying, “ How could you know that ? ”

Suddenly she looked at our hero and soon recognised him.

“ O mother, ’tis he—I recollect now, ’tis he ! ”

“ Who, my child ? ” replied Donna Clara, who had been struck dumb with his astonishing power of fortune-telling.

“ The officer who captured us, and was so kind.”

Jack burst out into a laughter, and then acknowledged that she had discovered him.

“ At all events, Donna Agnes,” said he, “ acknowledge that, ragged as I am, I have seen you in a much greater *deshabille*.<sup>2</sup> ”

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1. = *madam*.

2. or ‘ *dishabille*, ’ careless dress.

Agnes ran way from the place, partly to hide her confusion and partly to tell her father whom he had as his guest. This news soon brought all of them together, and Jack received their thanks

"I little thought," said the Don, "that I should have been so doubly indebted to you, sir. Command my services as you please, both of you. My sons are at Palermo, and I trust you will allow them the pleasure of your friendship, when you are tired of remaining with us."

Jack made his politest bow, and then looked down upon his torn dress.

"My brothers' clothes will fit them, I think," said Agnes to her father; "they have left plenty in their wardrobes."

"If the signors will condescend<sup>1</sup> to wear them till they can replace their own."

Midshipmen are very condescending—they followed Don Rebiera, and condescended to choose the best. After some more conversation they had dinner, and Jack and his friend retired to the garden.

"How odd," said Gascoigne, "that we should come here!"

"My good fellow, we did not come here. Destiny brought us in a cart. She may take us to Tyburn<sup>2</sup> in the same way."

## CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH JACK'S HIGH SPIRITS BRING HIM INTO TROUBLE  
AND HE IS PERSUADED TO REMAIN IN THE SERVICE

AT the end of a fortnight, during which they were treated more like the members of the family, and Agnes and

1. stoop; be pleased to: (in reference to inferiors): a term of courtesy here.

2. place of execution in London.

Jack were drawn closer to each other, they took their leave of the family, provided with letters of recommendation to many of the first nobility of Palermo.

For the first few moments they followed their guide in silence. Gascoigne rallied his friend on Agnes' preference for him, remarking that people in love were melancholy.

Only now Jack thought that he might perhaps be in love for he felt melancholy.

It was not until late in the evening that our adventurers arrived at Palermo. After dismissing the guide with a liberal reward, they took their abode at a hotel, and sending for the tailor, ordered a new set of clothes. Then they delivered the letters of recommendation and went to the banker to whom they were addressed by Don Rebiera. Jack drew two hundred pounds for both. When they returned to the inn, they found Don Philip and Don Martin, to whom their father had written, who welcomed them with open arms. They were two fine young men of eighteen and nineteen, who were finishing their education in the army.

Jack was soon their inseparable companion, and was introduced to the best society, in which he was very popular. Three weeks passed away like lightning.

At last one fine day, H. M. frigate *Aurora* anchored in the bay, and Jack and Gascoigne, who were at a party at the Duke of Pentaro's, met the captain of the *Aurora* who was also invited. The duchess introduced them to Captain Tartar who, taking them to be young Englishmen of fortune on their travels, was very gracious. Jack was so pleased with his politeness that he invited him to dinner the next day. Captain Tartar accepted it with pleasure.

Jack's party was large. The Sicilian gentlemen did not drink much wine, but Captain Tartar liked his bottle, and though they left the table to attend a ball given that evening by the Marquesa Novara, Jack was too polite not to sit it out with the captain. Gascoigne closed his chair to Jack's, who, (he was afraid), being a little affected with wine, would "let the cat out of the bag."

The captain was amazingly entertaining. Jack presently told him how he came in his Majesty's ship *Harpy*. Gascoigne gave Jack a nudge, but it was of no use, for as the wine got into his brain so did his notions of his equality.

"You belong to her? in what capacity may I ask?" inquired the captain, in a much less respectful tone.

"Midshipman," replied Jack; "so is Mr Gascoigne."

"Umph! you are on leave then."

"No, indeed," replied Jack; "I'll tell you how it is, my dear fellow."

"Excuse me for one moment," replied Captain Tartar, rising up; "I must give some directions to my servant which I forgot."

Captain Tartar hailed his coxswain out of the window, gave orders just outside of the door, and then returned to the table. In the meantime Gascoigne cautioned Jack, but to no purpose. Jack now gave an account of his adventures to the captain, concluding that in a week or so he should return to Don Reberia and propose for the hand of Donna Agnes.

"Ah!" exclaimed Captain Tartar.

"Tartar, the wine stands with you," said Jack, "allow me to help you."

Captain Tartar threw himself back in his chair and whistled to relieve his pent-up feelings.

Then Jack proposed that they should go to the Marquesa's. The coxswain came to the door, touched his hat to the captain and looked significantly.

"And so, sir," cried the captain, in a voice of thunder, rising from his chair, "you're a d—d runaway midshipman who, if you belonged to my ship, instead of marrying Donna Agnes, should marry the gunner's daughter. Two midshipmen sporting plain clothes in the best society and having the impudence to ask a post-captain<sup>1</sup> to dine with them and addressing him as Tartar and my dear fellow! You infernal young scamps!" continued the captain, now boiling with rage and striking his fist on the table.

"Allow me to observe, sir," said Jack who was completely sobered by the address, "that we do not belong to your ship and that we are in plain clothes."

The captain called them a couple of swindlers, passing themselves off as young men of fortune.

"You lie, sir," exclaimed our hero in a rage. "I am a gentleman, sir—I am sorry I cannot pay you the same compliment."

The astonishment and rage of Captain Tartar took away his breath. He tried to speak—he gasped, and then sat or almost fell down in his chair; at last he recovered himself.

"Matthews! The sergeant of marines."

The sergeant entered and saluted.

"Bring your marines in—take charge of these two. Directly you are on board, put them both in irons."

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1. holder of commission as commander of vessel of more than 20 guns, etc.

The marines with their bayonets walked in, and took possession of our hero and his friend.

"Perhaps, sir," replied Jack, "you will permit us to pay our bill before we go on board. We are no swindlers, and it is rather a heavy one—or as you have taken possession of our persons, you will, perhaps, do us the favour to discharge it yourself;" and Jack threw on the table a heavy purse of dollars.

"I have only to observe, Captain Tartar, that I wish to be liberal to the waiters."

"Sergeant, let them pay their bill," said the captain in a more subdued tone. He then took his hat and sword, and walked out of the room.

"By heavens, Easy, what have you done?"

"He called me a swindler and I would give the same answer tomorrow," replied Jack.

"If you are ready, gentlemen," said the sergeant, who had been long enough with the captain to know that to be punished by him was no proof of fault having been committed.

In less than half an hour they found themselves in irons under the half-deck of H. M. frigate *Aurora*.

Meanwhile Captain Tartar proceeded to the ball and was at once asked by the young Rebieras what had become of Jack and his friend. The captain, in no good humour, told them what he had done.

Now the Rebieras knew very well that Jack and his friend were midshipmen, but could not understand why, on this account, they should not consider themselves as gentlemen and be treated accordingly.

"Do you mean to say, signor," said Don Philip, "that you have accepted their hospitality, laughed, talked, pledged them in wine, as we have seen you this evening, and after they have confided in you that you have put them in irons?"

"Yes, sir, I do," replied Captain Tartar.

"Then, by heaven, you have my defiance, and you are no gentleman!" replied Don Philip the elder. The other did the same.

To these young officers the use of such power under such circumstances appeared monstrous, and they were determined, at all events, to show to the captain that, in society at least, it could be resented. They collected their friends, told them what had passed, and begged them to circulate it through the room. This was soon done, and Captain Tartar found himself avoided, while Don Philip and his brother walked up and down talking, so that he might hear what they said, and looking at him with eyes flashing with indignation. The captain soon returned to his inn, more indignant than ever. The next morning Don Ignatio Verez was announced, who, on behalf of Don Philip, challenged the captain to fight a duel.

To this the captain raised no objection, though indignant that a midshipman should have been the cause of it. The meeting took place—at the first fire the ball of Don Philip passed through Captain Tartar's brain and he instantly fell dead. In a short time, Don Philip and his brother, with many of their friends, went off in the Governor's barge to condole with our hero.

The first lieutenant, now captain in charge, liberated them as he was not informed of the grounds of complaint



against them, but he felt it his duty to take them to Malta where their ship lay. After an hour's conversation and assurances of friendship, Don Philip, his brother and their friends, took their leave of the two midshipmen.

The day after the funeral, the *Aurora* sailed for Malta and on arrival there the acting captain sent them on board the *Harpy* without any remark. Mr James, the acting captain, met Captain Wilson at the Governor's table, and stated that Jack and Gascoigne had been put in irons by order of Captain Tartar; his suspicions, and the duel that followed in consequence. Nothing else was known.

"I should like to know what happened to my friend Jack," said the Governor, who had laughed at it till he held his sides.

"Wilson, do bring him here tomorrow morning, and let us have his story."

"I am afraid of encouraging him, Sir Thomas—he is much too wild already. He has nothing but adventures, and they all end too favourably."

"Well, to oblige me, send for him—he was not much to blame in absconding,<sup>1</sup> as it appears he thought he would be hung—I want to see the lad."

Captain Wilson did so, sending a note to Sawbridge to send Jack to him at the Governor's house at ten o'clock in the morning. And Jack made his appearance in his uniform—he did not much care for what was said to him, as he was resolved to leave the service. He had been put in irons, and *the iron had entered into his soul*.

Jack walked in with courage, but respectfully. He was fond of Captain Wilson and wished to show him respect

1. departing secretly to escape responsibility.

Captain Wilson pointed out that he had committed a great error in fighting a duel, a greater error in demeaning himself by fighting the purser's steward, and a still greater in running away from his ship. Jack looked respectfully to Captain Wilson, acknowledged that he had done wrong, and promised to be more careful another time, if Captain Wilson would look over it.

"Captain Wilson, allow me to plead for the young man," said the Governor; "I am convinced that it has only been an error in judgment."

"Well, Mr Easy, I shall take no more notice of this. But recollect that you have occasioned me a great deal of anxiety by your mad pranks and that I am too anxious for your welfare not to be uncomfortable when you run such risks. You may now go on board your ship and your friend may do the same."

Jack's heart softened at this kind treatment, and making his bow, he was about to quit the room, when the Governor said:

"Mr Easy, you have not breakfasted."

"I have, sir," replied Jack, "before I came on shore."

"But a midshipman can always eat two breakfasts, particularly when his own comes first—so sit down and breakfast with us—it's all over now."

"Even if it was not," said Captain Wilson, laughing, "I doubt whether it would spoil Mr Easy's breakfast. Come, Mr Easy, sit down."

Jack bowed and took his chair. When breakfast was over, Captain Wilson said: "Mr Easy, you have generally a few adventures to speak of when you return; will you

“tell the Governor and me what has taken place since you left us?”

Jack complied with their request, but before doing so, he requested them to keep it secret as it was important to him and his friend. When he concluded his narrative, he said he wished to leave the service.

“Pooh! nonsense,” said the Governor, “you shan’t leave the Mediterranean while I am here. No, no; you must have more adventures and come back and tell them to me. And recollect, my lad, that, whenever you come to Malta, there is a bed at the Governor’s house and a seat at his table always ready for you.”

“You are very kind, Sir Thomas,” replied Jack, “but—”

“No buts at all, sir—you shan’t leave the service; besides, recollect that I can ask for leave of absence for you to go and see Donna Agnes—ay, and send you there too.”

Captain Wilson also remonstrated with our hero, and he gave up the point. It was harsh treatment which made him form the resolution, it was kindness which overcame it. The Governor asked the captain to let him have Jack with him till the ship was ready to start, which was easily given. So Jack ate at the Governor’s table, and took lessons in Spanish and Italian until the *Harpy* had been refitted.

When the day came to go on board the *Harpy*, he was at first unwilling, but kept his word to remain in the service. He was delighted to see Jolliffe and Mesty, laughed at the boatswain’s cheeks, inquired after the purser’s steward, shook hands with Gascoigne and his other messmates, gave Vigors a thrashing and sat down to supper.

## CHAPTER XVII

### IN WHICH OUR HERO PLAYS THE VERY DEVIL

MEANWHILE, Captain Wilson was given the command of the *Aurora* and Sawbridge that of the *Harpy*. Gascoigne and Mesty were taken with Jack on board the *Aurora*. Jack and his friend were given permission to go on shore. Our hero took up his quarters at the only respectable hotel in Mahon,<sup>1</sup> and whenever he met an officer of the *Aurora*, he invited him to dinner. Jack's reputation had gone before him, and the midshipmen drank his wine and swore he was a trump.

At last Jack had remained so long on shore, keeping open house, and the first lieutenant found the officers so much more anxious for leave, now that they were at little or no expense, that he sent him a very polite message requesting the pleasure of his company on board that evening. Jack answered politely that, not being aware that he would be required, he had promised to accompany some friends to a masquerade<sup>2</sup> that night, but that he would not fail to pay his respects to the first lieutenant the next day.

The masquerade was held in a church about two miles and a half from Mahon. Jack had selected the costume of the *devil* as being the most appropriate, and started on a jackass for the masquerade. As he was just going in, he perceived a yellow carriage, with two footmen in gaudy liveries; and with his usual politeness, when the footmen opened the door, offered his arm to hand out a fat old lady covered with diamonds. Perceiving Jack covered

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1. port, Minorca, one of Balearic Islands, Mediterranean Sea.

2. assembly of masked persons.

with hair, with his trident<sup>1</sup> and horns and long tail, she gave a loud scream and would have fallen, had it not been for Captain Wilson who, in his full uniform, was coming in and caught her in his arms: while the old lady thanked him, Jack hastily retreated. So he entered the church, but the crowd was so dense that our hero was soon tired of flourishing his trident and sticking it into people, who wondered what the devil he meant.

Disgusted with it, he went out with his cloak on in search of adventures. Walking about half a mile, he came to a splendid house, standing in a garden of orange trees. Observing that a window was open and lights were in the room, he climbed up to the window and looked in. On a bed lay an elderly person, evidently dying, and by the side of the bed were three priests, one of whom held the crucifix,<sup>2</sup> another the censer,<sup>3</sup> and a third was sitting at a table with a paper, pen, and ink. As Jack understood Spanish, he listened and heard one of the priests say :

“Your sins have been enormous, my son, and I cannot give you absolution unless you make amends.”

“I have,” answered the dying man, “left money for ten thousand masses for my soul.”

“Five hundred thousand masses are not sufficient. How have you gained your enormous wealth? by usury and robbing the poor.”

“I have left a thousand dollars to be distributed among the poor on the day of my funeral.”

“You must leave all your property to the holy church.”

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1. three-pronged (toothed) spear.

2. cross with the figure of Christ on it.

3. vessel to contain incense (a fragrant substance).

"And my children!" said the dying man faintly.

"What are your children compared to your salvation? Either consent, or not only do I refuse you the consolation of the dying, but I excommunicate—"

"Mercy, holy father!" said the old man.

"There is no mercy, you are damned for ever. Amen. Now hear: *ex communicabo te*—<sup>1</sup>"

"Stop—stop—have you the paper ready?"

"'Tis here, all ready. We will read it, for God forbid that it should be said that the holy church received an involuntary gift."

"I will sign it; be quick, absolve me." And the paper was signed with difficulty, the priests supporting the dying man. The priest then went through the ceremony.

Jack thought this was a rascally business, and dropping his cloak and jumping upon the window-sill, uttered a yelling kind of "ha! ha! ha ha!"

The priests turned round, saw the demon as they imagined—dropped the paper on the table and threw themselves with their faces on the floor. "*Exorciso te*,<sup>2</sup>" stammered one.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" repeated Jack, entering the room and taking up the paper which he burned by the flame of the candle. The old man was dead. Giving one more cry to keep them in their places, he blew out the candles, made a spring out of the window, and disappeared, catching up his cloak.

1. Latin words beginning the formula of excommunication, i. e., cutting off a person from communication with the Church: (religious outlawry).

2. Latin words beginning the formula of exorcism (expulsion) of evil spirits.



"Jack plays the very Devil"

Jack ran until he was out of his breath, and then stopped, and sat down by the side of the road. It was broad moonlight, and he knew not where he was. "But," thought he, "Minorca has not many high roads. I have done some good this evening. But if the priests find me out—I never dare come on shore again—they'd have me in the inquisition.<sup>1</sup> I will get on that hill and see if I can take a departure."

It was twelve or fourteen feet high. He ascended it and looked about him. Just then he saw the yellow carriage of the old lady and was watching it as it passed below him, when suddenly a dozen men rushed out and seized the horses' heads—a discharge of firearms, and the coachmen and the footmen dropped off. The robbers were hauling out the old lady with her diamonds. Jack came to a quick decision—he might frighten them as he had already frightened one set of robbers. Throwing off his cloak and advancing to the edge of the precipice, with the full moon behind him, he raised his trident, and, just as they were raising their knives, yelled a most unearthly "ha! ha! ha! ha!" The robbers looked up, and forgetting the masquerade, for there is a double terror in guilt, screamed with fear; most of them ran away and dropped after a hundred yards; others remained paralysed and insensible. Jack descended the hill, quickly bundled the old lady into the carriage, seized the reins, and jumped upon the box. He then made the horses go at a rattling pace and then slackened the reins, for he wisely argued they would go home if he let them have their way. He

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1. old religious court for suppressing heresy: used by the Roman Catholic Church as an engine of tyranny.



was right, for the horses, before they arrived at the town, turned off and stopped at a large country house Jack, meanwhile, had put on his cloak and laid aside his mask and head-piece. At the sound of the wheels the servants came out, and soon a young lady made her appearance. The old lady had recovered her senses and was helped out. Jack entered the house and told the young lady what had happened. A strong party was soon sent out for the servants, and Jack took his leave, stating that he was an English officer belonging to a frigate in the harbour. He knew his way back and in half an hour was again at the inn. He thought it prudent to keep his own secret, and, merely saying he had taken a long walk in the country, went to bed.

The next morning when Jack made ready to go on board his ship, a sort of half-clerical, half-legal looking gentleman was introduced. The latter requested Jack to write for him the name of the officer who was dressed as a devil in the masquerade of the night before.

Jack was not quite sure of his visitor's identity, and remembering the power of the priests, gave the name of his captain whom they dared not touch lightly. The stranger bowed and left the room, and Jack soon after went on board.

## CHAPTER XVIII

IN WHICH JACK BECOMES EXCESSIVELY UNWELL AND  
AGREES TO GO THROUGH A COURSE OF MEDICINE

THE first lieutenant of the *Aurora* was a very good man in many respects, but he had one peculiarity: which was that he had taken a fancy to a 'quack medicine, called Enouy's Universal Medicine for all Mankind. In his opinion it cured

everything, and he spent one of his quarterly bills every year in bottles of this stuff. He recommended it to everybody in the ship and nothing pleased him so much as to give a dose of it to every one who could be persuaded to take it. Mr Pottyfar, the first lieutenant, was not very liberal in granting permission to go on shore, but one could get round him by pretending to have faith in the efficacy of his medicine. This Jack learnt soon after he joined duty.

The frigate sailed on the second day to join the Toulon fleet, but on the way a violent tempest burst on her and damaged her considerably. In this condition she arrived at Toulon, and the admiral ordered Captain Wilson to repair to port and refit. In a few hours the *Aurora* had shaped her course for Malta.

"Master Easy," said Mesty, "why do you go to sea? When men have no money, nothing to eat, they go to sea; but everybody says you have plenty of money—why do you come to sea?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Jack thoughtfully; "I came to sea on account of equality and the rights of man."

"Eh, Master Easy, you come to the wrong place anyhow: now I have thought a good deal lately, and by all the power, I think equality all stuff."

"All stuff, Mesty, why? You used to think otherwise."

"Yes, Master Easy, but then I boiled the kettle for all the young gentlemen. Now that I'm a ship's corporal and have a cane, I think so no longer."

Jack made no reply, but he thought the more. Jack's notions of equality were rapidly disappearing; he defended them now more from habit, and perhaps a wilfulness which would not allow him to acknowledge himself in the wrong.

After a few minutes Mesty began the attack. He pointed out the folly of being a midshipman with all his hardships, when there was no need for it and when he could marry and live like a gentleman.

The mention of marriage turned Jack's thoughts to Agnes and he made no reply. Mesty walked away, leaving our hero in deep thought. Jack for the first time began to think of the future; and was perplexed when he tried to answer Mesty's question to himself.

In due time the vessel arrived at Malta and the captain went on shore to the Governor's. Jack asked for permission to go on shore, which was refused by Mr Pottyfar who had quarrelled with the chaplain. Jack was disgusted with the service. The next morning, however, Captain Wilson came on board and asked Jack to go with him to the Governor, and Jack was pleased. Now he went to Mr Pottyfar and told him how the captain had ordered him to go on shore.

Mr Pottyfar was now himself and wished him a happy time. Jack now thought of trying his medicine.

"I am not very well, Mr Pottyfar, and those pills of the doctor don't agree with me—I always am ill if I am long without air and exercise."

"Very true," said the first lieutenant. "I've no opinion of the doctor's remedies; the only thing that's worth having is the universal medicine."

"I should so like to try it, sir," said Jack. "I read the book one day and it said that if you took it daily for three weeks, and with plenty of air and exercise, it would do wonders."

"And it's very true," replied Pottyfar; "I have plenty—shall I give you a dose?"

"If you please, sir," replied Jack; "and tell me how often I am to take it, for my head aches all day."

Pottyfar took him down, gave him three or four bottles of it, and gave him instructions how to take it and what to eat and to avoid.

"But, sir," said Jack, "I am afraid that I cannot take it for long, for, as the ship is ready for fitting, I shall be exposed to the sun all day."

"Yes, if you are wanted, Mr Easy; but we have plenty here without you."

"I will begin tonight, sir, if you please. I sleep at the Governor's—shall I come on board tomorrow morning?"

"No, no; take care of yourself and get well. Send me word how it acts."

"I will, sir," replied Jack delighted; "I am very much obliged to you, sir. Gascoigne and I were thinking of asking you, but did not like to do so: he, poor fellow, suffers from headaches almost as bad as I do, and the doctor's pills are of no use to him."

"He shall have it too, Mr Easy. I thought he looked pale. I'll see to it this afternoon."

Off went Jack delighted. He ordered Mesty to put up his whole portmanteau instead of the small bundle he had put into the boat, and telling Gascoigne what a spoke he had put into his wheel, was soon in the boat with the captain and went on shore.

## CHAPTER XIX

IN WHICH CAPTAIN WILSON IS REPAID WITH INTEREST  
FOR JACK'S BORROWING HIS NAME

"WELL, Jack, my boy, have you any long story ready for me?" inquired the Governor.

"Yes, sir," replied Jack, "I have a very good one."

"Very well, we'll hear them after dinner," replied the Governor.

"In the meantime find out your room and take possession."

"That must not be for very long, Governor," said Captain Wilson. "Mr Easy must learn his duty, and there is a good opportunity now."

"If you please, sir," replied Jack, "I'm on the sick-list."

The captain was surprised when he was told that Jack was on Pottyfar's list, as he proposed going through a course of his universal medicine. The Governor requested to be enlightened, and Jack gave an account of how he had obtained permission for a long stay on shore.

The Governor laughed heartily, the captain joining in it presently. But the latter protested in Jack's own interest that he should not allow Jack to stay on shore. "I admit it all, sir," said Jack, "provided I intend to follow the profession." So saying, he bowed and left the veranda where they had been talking.

He meant by this hint to express his desire to remain on shore and was so understood by the Governor. But the captain could not allow it in the interest of discipline. The Governor solved the difficulty by asking the captain to make him his orderly midshipman, which would give him employment and allow him to stay at the Governor's at

night. This would satisfy all, said the Governor; "you, because you employ him on service—the first lieutenant, because he takes his medicine—and Jack, because he can dine with me every day."

This arrangement suited all, Jack doing his duty for the major part of the day and remaining on shore for the night. Gascoigne too was often on shore with our hero, going through a course of Pottyfar's medicine.

One day Captain Wilson, when breakfasting with the Governor, received a letter which astonished him.

"Honourable Sir," it ran, "It is my duty to advise you that the Hon. Lady Signora Alforgas de Guzman, now deceased, has, in her testament, bequeathed to you the sum of one thousand doubloons in gold as a testimony of your kind services on the night of the 12th of August. It shall be remitted in any way you please to appoint, etc. *Alfonso Xerez.*"

Jack heard the letter read, rose quietly and slipped out without their perceiving it.

The fact was that he had not told even the Governor his adventures at Mahon because he had used the captain's name. Now he was delighted because it had procured for the captain this fine legacy.

"There must be some mistake," said the captain; "12th of August—that was the day of the masquerade."

"A lucky one for you, at all events: the money is yours."

"I never heard of anything taking place there—I was there, but I left very early. Mr Easy," said Captain Wilson, turning round, but Jack was gone.

"Was he at the masquerade?" asked the Governor.

"Yes, I know he was, for the first lieutenant told me."

"Depend upon it," replied the Governor, striking his fist upon the table, "that Jack's at the bottom of it."

"I should not be surprised at his being at the bottom of anything," replied Captain Wilson, laughing.

"Leave it to me, Wilson, I'll find it out."

After a little more conversation, the captain went on board, leaving Jack behind on purpose. But Jack had already made up his mind to make the Governor his confidant, and he told him the whole story. The Governor held his sides at our hero's description, especially at his ruse of giving the captain's name instead of his own.

"You'll kill me, Jack, before you've done with me," said old Tom at last; "but now what is to be done?"

Jack now became grave; he told the Governor that he had plenty of money and that the captain was poor with a large family, and that the Governor should somehow manage to make the captain accept the legacy.

"Right, boy, right!" replied the Governor; "but Wilson is the very soul of honour, and there may be some difficulty about it. You have told nobody?"

"Not a soul but you, Sir Thomas."

"It never will do to tell him all this, Jack, for he would insist that the legacy belonged to you."

"I have it, sir," replied Jack. "When I was going into the masquerade, I offered to hand this very old lady out of her carriage, and she was so frightened at my dress of a devil, that she would have fallen down had it not been for Captain Wilson who supported her, and she was very thankful to him."

The Governor agreed with Jack's suggestion. When the captain returned in the afternoon, the Governor told him

the story of the friars and the will, and added, "Jack had a hand in the legacy to you; for he frightened the old lady as a devil and you caught her in your arms and saved her from falling."

The captain remembered the incident, but still he said, "A thousand doubloons for picking up an old lady!"

"There's nothing strange in this world, Wilson, nothing at all—we may slave for years and get no reward, and do a trifle out of politeness and become independent. In my opinion this mystery is unravelled.<sup>1</sup> The old lady, for I knew the family, must have died immensely rich: a heavy fall would have been, to one so fat, a most serious affair; you saved her, and she has rewarded you handsomely."

The captain was at length persuaded to accept it, and advised to send for it at once as the exchange was high and it would fetch four thousand pounds. Captain Wilson was silent for a few moments and observed, "How much, indeed, am I indebted for the father of young Easy!"

The Governor thought otherwise, but did not say so. He said.

"Allow me to say that for what you are you have been wholly indebted to your own gallantry: still Mr Easy is a fine generous fellow, and so is his son, I can tell you."

## CHAPTER XX

### HOW AN ACT OF HUMANITY HAS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

THE arrival of the mail from England interrupted them and they retired with their letters to their rooms. Jack received a letter for the first time from his father, which

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1. solved.



showed his father's advance in the direction of his theories and which to some extent displeased him. At dinner he and Gascoigne were introduced to a young gentleman who called himself Don Mathias and whom later they recognised as Don Silvio who had attempted to murder Don Rebiera. This was revealed to the Governor, who sent him in a boat under a strong guard to Sicily, for he was required by its authorities to answer a charge of murder and sacrilege against Don Rebiera and Father Thomas who, in attempting to prevent it, had been wounded.

Now a sloop-of-war arrived from the fleet ordering Captain Wilson to sail as soon as he could and cruise off Corsica and obtain information of a Russian frigate in that coast. On the third day the *Aurora* left the harbour and reached the Corsican coast in a week. On the eighteenth day after she had quitted Malta, the enemy was sighted and, after a severe engagement, was boarded. Mr Pottyfar was mortally wounded and soon died, with two dozen empty phials of his favourite medicine under his pillow. The *Aurora* returned to Malta to refit. Meanwhile Captain Wilson's despatches had been received by the admiral and acknowledged by a brig sent to Malta. The admiral replied, complimenting the captain and desiring him to go to Palermo with communications of importance to the authorities and wait for an answer, and then to join the fleet at Toulon. Jack was in ecstasies, for he might thus see Agnes and her brothers. Once more, therefore, the *Aurora* sailed away from Malta and on the second day made the coast of Sicily, not far from where Jack and his friend had been driven on shore. They stood in close to the coast as they

had not a leading wind to Palermo. As they stood in, the glasses were directed to land.

"What is that, Gascoigne," said Easy, "under that precipice? It looks like a vessel."

"Yes, it is a vessel on the rocks: by her prow she looks like a galley," replied Gascoigne.

So it proved to be—one of the Sicilian government galleys with condemned prisoners on board, abandoned by the officers during the strong breeze of the night. The *Aurora* was steered to about a mile from the galley-boat. Captain Wilson had to choose between allowing so many to perish miserably (for they were chained to their seats in the galley and could not therefore escape), or to let loose upon society a set of cut-throats, and by so doing probably displease the Sicilian authorities. He chose to save them, and sent two cutters in charge of Jack and his friend to release the galley-slaves and land them in small divisions.

"Viva los Inglesos,<sup>1</sup>" cried the galley-slaves, as Easy climbed up the galley.

"I say, Ned, did you ever see such a precious set of villains?" observed Easy, as he surveyed the faces of the men who were chained.

"No," replied Gascoigne; "and I think, if the captain had seen them as we have, he would have left them where they were."

The padlocks were struck off by the armourer one by one, and it required six trips to land all the one hundred and forty four villains. When Jack was about to shove off with the last cargo, one of the slaves cried out to him in a

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1. 'Long live the English!'

mocking tone, "Addio,<sup>1</sup> signor." In this naked wretch, Jack recognised Don Silvio!

"I will acquaint Don Rebiera of your arrival, signor," said the villain, springing up the rocks and mixing with the rest, who now commenced hooting and laughing at their preservers.

Jack felt anxious that he had set at liberty that villain who had twice attempted the life of Don Rebiera, and who now had a large number of villains to aid him in any enterprise that would give them plunder. There was no help for it now; so they returned to the frigate and told the captain of Don Silvio's freedom and his fears of what might take place from their being about ten miles from Don Rebiera's house.

Captain Wilson was sorry for his imprudence, and setting sail at once reached Palermo and informed the authorities, who immediately despatched troops in quest of the liberated criminals.

Captain Wilson, feeling for Jack's anxiety, called him over to him on deck and gave him and his friend permission to go on shore. Mesty was also allowed to go with them.

In half an hour our two midshipmen with Mesty had landed, and proceeded to the inn where they had put up before: they were armed to the teeth. Their first inquiries were for the Rebiera brothers, who (they were told) were then with their father.

In a short time four horses and a guide were procured and at eight o'clock in the morning the party set off in the direction of Don Rebiera's country seat.

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1. 'Adieu.'

They came up with a body of troops sent in pursuit of the liberated criminals. Jack knew the commanding officer and told him his fears. The officer replied that he would march the whole night and be at the place at ten the next morning.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when they arrived at the house of Don Rebiera. Jack and his friend hastened into the house and found the family in the large sitting-room, ignorant of their danger and astonished and pleased at the arrival of their old friends.

After the first greetings, Jack stated the cause of their arrival.

"At all events, we must be prepared," said Don Philip.

"How many can we muster?" asked Gascoigne.

"We will have five men here, or we shall have by the evening," replied Don Philip; "all I think good men—my father, my brother and myself."

"We are three—four with the guide, whom I know nothing about."

"Twelve in all—not one too many; but I think we can hold out till the morning."

"Had we not better send the ladies away?" said Jack.

"Who is to escort them?" replied Don Philip; "we shall only weaken our force: besides they may fall into the villains' hands."

"Shall we all leave the house together?" asked Don Rebiera.

"Still we may be intercepted by them," observed Don Philip; "in the house we have an advantage."

"Well," replied Don Rebiera thoughtfully; "then let us prepare, for depend upon it Don Silvio will not lose

such an opportunity to wreak his vengeance. He will be here tonight : I only wonder he has not been here with his companions before."

"We must now see what means of defence we have," said Philip.

"Come, brother—will you come, sir?"

## CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH THE PARTIES BEATEN RISE HIGHER AND HIGHER AT EACH DISCOMFITURE—NOTHING BUT THE TROOPS COULD HAVE PREVENTED THEM FROM GOING UP TO HEAVEN

DON Rebiera and his two sons quitted the room, Gascoigne entered into conversation with the senora,<sup>1</sup> while Easy took this opportunity of addressing Agnes. She had vastly improved. The only objection to their marriage seemed to be Father Thomaso, who had great influence with her parents, especially her mother. She was a Catholic, and she said, "He must talk to you—he will convert you."

"We'll argue the point, Agnes. I will convert him if he has common sense ; if not, it's no use arguing with him. Where is he?"

"He will soon be at home."

The gentlemen now returned with firearms and other weapons they could collect. At this moment Pedro, who had been despatched to the neighbouring town, returned with news of the galley-slaves.

"They have broken into the houses," said he, "robbed everything—murdered many—collected all the arms, pro-

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1. used like English 'madam' or 'lady'.

visions and wine they could lay their hands on, and have marched away into the mountains. This took place last night. They have taken away my loaded cart. Signor, I heard them mention your name."

So all the men were called together and the house was barricaded<sup>1</sup> as well as circumstances would permit; the first story was also made a fortress by loading the landing-place with armories and chests of drawers. The upper story or attic, if it might be so called, was defended in the same way, that they might retreat from one to the other if the doors were forced.

It was eight o'clock in the evening before all was ready, when they heard the sound of an approaching multitude. They looked out of one of the windows, and perceived the house surrounded by the galley-slaves, in number about a hundred. They were all dressed with whatever they could pick up: some had firearms, but most of them were supplied with only swords and knives. They all appeared to be under a leader who was issuing directions—the leader was recognised by those in the house to be Don Silvio.

"Master Easy, you show me that man," said Mesty. Easy did so.

The galley-slaves appeared to be very anxious to surround the house that no one should escape, and Don Silvio was arranging the men.

"Ned," said Jack, "let us show him that we are here. He said that he would acquaint Don Reberia with our arrival—let us prove to him that he is too late."

"It would not be a bad plan," replied Gascoigne; "if it were possible that these fellows had any gratitude among

1. defended (with barrier, as, furniture, &c.)

them, some of them might relent at the idea of attacking those who saved them."

"Not a bit; but it will prove to them that there are more in the house than they think; and we can frighten some of them by telling them that the soldiers are near at hand."

Jack immediately threw up the casement and called out in a loud voice, "Don Silvio, galley-slave!"

The party hailed turned round and beheld Jack, Gascoigne and Mesty standing at the window of the upper floor.

"We have saved you the trouble of announcing us," called out Gascoigne. "We are here to receive you."

"And in three hours the troops will be here, so you must be quick, Don Silvio," continued Jack; and his friend let fly his pistol at Don Silvio.

The window was then immediately closed. The appearance of our heroes and their news of the speedy arrival of the troops was not without effect. The criminals trembled at the idea; Don Silvio was mad with rage—he pointed out to the men the necessity of immediate attack—the improbability of the troops arriving so soon, and the wealth which he expected was locked up by Don Reberia in his mansion. This rallied them, and they advanced to the doors, which they attempted to force without success, losing several men by the occasional fire from those within the house. After an hour's repeated attempts in this manner, they brought up a long piece of timber which required sixty men to carry it, and ran with it against the door; and the weight of the timber drove it off its hinges, and an entrance was obtained.

The lower story was now abandoned, but the barricade at the head of the stairs opposed their progress. The defenders now opened a smart fire upon the assailants through the loopholes which had been prepared, and the latter could not return it. Though the galley-slaves were repulsed several times with great loss, they continued the attack, removing the barriers slowly.

"We shall have to retreat," exclaimed Don Reberia "very soon they will have torn down all. What do you think, Mr Easy?"

"Hold this as long as we can. How are we off for ammunition?"

"Plenty as yet."

Mesty also was for holding it as long as they could. This was the reason for the first defence being held two hours more. At last the retreat was sounded and the gallant defenders hastened to the other story, where the ladies were, and the galley-slaves were in possession of the first floor—made angry by the defence, mad with wine and victory, but finding nothing.

The attack was now made upon the second landing, but as the stairs were now narrower, and their defences stronger in proportion, they for a long while gained no advantage. On the contrary, many of their men were wounded and taken down below.

The darkness of the night prevented both parties from seeing distinctly, which was rather in favour of the assailants. Many climbed over the fortress of piled-up furniture, and were killed as soon as they appeared on the other side. For four hours did this assault and defence continue, until daylight came, and then the plan of assault



was altered : they again brought up the poles, hammered the piece of furniture into fragments, and gained ground. The defenders, though worn out, flinched not : they knew that their lives and the lives of those dearest to them were at stake. Still the criminals, with Silvio at their head, progressed, and there was but one chest of drawers now defending the landing-place.

“ We must now fight for our lives,” exclaimed Gascoigne to Easy, “ for what else can we do ? ”

“ Do ?—get on the roof and fight there, then,” replied Jack.

“ That’s well thought of, Jack,” said Gascoigne. “ Mesty, up and see if there is any place we can retreat to in case of need.”

Mesty hastened to obey, and soon returned with a report that there was a trap-door leading into the loft<sup>1</sup> under the roof, and that they could draw the ladder up after them.

“ Then we may laugh at them,” cried Jack. “ Mesty, stay here while I and Gascoigne assist the ladies up,” explaining to the Rebieras why they went.

They hastened to the ladies, conducted them up the ladder into the loft, and requested them to have no fear : they then returned to the defences on the stairs. They found their companions hard pressed, but the stairs were narrow and the assailants could not bring their force against them. But the convicts now brought up a large supply of heavy stones which they threw with great force and execution. Two of Don Rebiera’s men and Don Martin were wounded **seriously**.

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1. space between roof and ceiling of uppermost stony.

“We must retreat, Jack,” said Gascoigne, “the stones can do no harm where we are going to. What think you, Don Philip?”

“I agree with you; let those who are wounded be first carried up, and then we will follow.”

This was soon effected, and as soon as they were up, they drew the ladder after them. They had hardly done this, when they were followed with the yells and shoutings of the galley-slaves, who had passed the last barriers and thought themselves sure of their prey: but they were disappointed—they found them more secure than ever.

The rage of Don Silvio at this protracted<sup>1</sup> resistance and their present security no words can describe. To get at them was impossible; so he determined to set fire to the room, and suffocate them, if he could do no otherwise. He gave his directions to his men, who rushed down for straw, but in so doing he carelessly passed under the trap-door; and Mesty, who had carried up with him two or three of the stones, dashed one down on the head of Don Silvio, who fell immediately.

He was carried away, but his orders were put in execution; the room was filled with straw and fodder, and lighted. The effects were soon felt. The trap-door had been shut, but the heat and smoke burst through; after a time the planks and rafters took fire and their situation was terrible. A small trap-window in the roof was knocked open and gave them a temporary relief; but now the rafters burned and crackled, and the smoke burst on them in thick columns. They could not see, and with difficulty could breathe. Fortunately the room below that which

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1. prolonged.

had been fired was but one out of four of the attics, and the loft they were in spread over the whole of the roof, so that they might remove themselves far from the fire. The house was slated with massive slate, and it was not found possible to remove them so as to give air, though frequent attempts were made. The ladies fainted.

"Master Easy, help me here—Master Gascoigne, come here," said Mesty. "Now heave with all your might: when we get one off, we get plenty."

They put their shoulders to one of the lower slates; it yielded—was disengaged, and slid down with a loud rattling below. The ladies were brought to it and their heads put outside. They soon recovered. Now no difficulty was found in removing other slates. In a few minutes they were all with their heads in the open air, but still there was fire below and no chance of escape. Just then a breeze of wind wafted the smoke that issued from the room away from them, and they beheld the detachment of troops making up to the house; a loud cheer was given, and attracted the notice of the soldiers. They perceived Easy and others; the house was surrounded and entered in an instant.

The galley-slaves were soon captured or killed, and in five minutes the troops had possession. But how to assist those above was the difficulty. There were no ladders that could reach so high, and there were no means of getting to them.

"I see no chance," observed Don Philip mournfully. "Easy, my dear fellow, and you Gascoigne, I am sorry that the feuds of our family should have brought you to such a dreadful death; but what can be done?"

"I don't know," replied Jack, "unless we could get ropes."

"You quite sure, Master Easy, that all galley-rascals below are gone?" asked Mesty. Jack told him that they were all under charge of the soldiers.

Mesty now asked them to help beat an opening into one of the rooms below not on fire. The floor of the loft was soon opened at the place where the board was loose, and with the help of the ladder, they all descended in safety and to the surprise of the commandant of the troops walked out of the door of the house.

The soldiers shouted as they saw them appear, supporting the ladies. The commanding officer, who was an intimate friend of Don Philip, flew to his arms. The prisoners were carefully examined by Mesty, and Don Silvio was not among them. The galley-slaves who were captured were forty-seven in number. The major part of the plunder and the carts were still where they had been drawn up.

As soon as the culprits had been secured, the troops tried to put out the flames, but in vain. The mansion was burned to the bare walls, and but little of the furniture saved; indeed, the major part of it had been destroyed in the attack made by Don Silvio and his adherents.<sup>1</sup>

Leaving directions with Pedro and his people that the property collected by the villains should be restored to their owners, Don Rebera ordered the horses, and with the whole party put himself under the protection of the troops, who, after some refreshment, returned to Palermo with the

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1. followers.

galley-slaves, bound and linked together in a double row. The next day Don Reberia and his family were once more in their palazzo,<sup>1</sup> and the two midshipmen with Mesty returned to their ship. Captain Wilson was on board and Jack made his report and then went down below very much pleased at what had passed, especially as he would have another long yarn<sup>2</sup> for the Governor on his return to Malta.

## CHAPTER XXII

IN WHICH JACK AND HIS FRIEND OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED  
OF THEMSELVES BUT GAIN THEIR POINT

THE *Aurora* remained three weeks at Palermo, during which Jack was constantly on shore at Don Reberia's house, and he was now looked upon as one who was soon to become a member of the family. Only Father Thomaso was against it and easily played upon the credulity of the mother of Agnes. The brothers heartily wished the priest at the devil, but were helpless. How to get rid of the priest? was the question, and Mesty was asked his advice. Mesty wanted time, and for this purpose they put through a plan on Mesty's advice, by which they would be left with Mesty on shore. The ship was to sail in a day or two, and Jack and his friend obtained leave to go on shore. Then they got into a carriage, and drove recklessly, running it against a bank opposite the barracks, and were thrown out. Captain Wilson who was at an inn had seen their mad gallop, and was therefore not surprised when he was told presently that two of his officers were seriously hurt on account of an accident and lay in the barracks. The Reberia brothers and the military surgeon were taken into

1. palace, mansion (Ital.)

2. (nautical) story.

the plot, and with their help it was given out that they were so hurt that they could not be removed for a long time. The ship's surgeon had to agree with the military surgeon from politeness, and Captain Wilson, sending Mesty from the ship to attend on the midshipmen, sailed away, bidding them join him at Malta on their recovery.

Jack felt very sorry at his deception because the captain seemed so sincerely affected by the accident, and so did his friend. Don Reberia and his wife were also kept in the dark about the nature of the accident.

The two midshipmen kept their beds, and Mesty sat on the chest between them, looking as grave as a judge. The question was how to get rid of the padre<sup>1</sup> Thomaso. Was he to be thrown over the molehead to the fishes—or his skull broken—was Mesty's knife to be resorted to—was he to be kidnapped or poisoned—were fair means to be employed—persuasion or bribery?

As our hero and Gascoigne were not Italians, they thought that bribery would be the more English-like way of doing the thing. So they composed a letter, to be delivered by Mesty to the friar, in which Jack offered to Father Thomaso the moderate sum of one thousand dollars, provided he would allow the marriage to proceed and not frighten the old lady with religious quibs<sup>2</sup> and crackers.

The delivery was deferred<sup>3</sup> for a few days, as a person in such a state as Jack was represented to be was not expected to write letters. After that time Mesty took the letter

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1. (Port.) priest.

2. A quib is a trifling in argument.

3. postponed.

and delivered it to the friar, who beckoned him to accompany him to his room, where he read the letter, and then again made signs to him to follow him. The friar led the way to his monastery, and as soon as Mesty was in his cell, he summoned another who could speak English to act as interpreter.

“Is your master recovering?”

“Yes,” replied Mesty, “he is at present doing well.”

“Have you served him long?”

“No,” replied Mesty.

“Are you very fond of him? does he treat you well, give you plenty of money?”

At these questions the artful black conceived that there was something in the wind, and he therefore quietly replied, “I do not care much for him.”

The friar fixed his keen eye upon Mesty, and perceived there was a savage look about the black, from which he concluded that he was a man who would suit his purpose.

The friar told Mesty that, if he would give his master a small powder, he should have the one thousand dollars his master had offered the priest

“Suppose they find me out?” asked Mesty, not to excite suspicion.

“You will be safe,” said the priest, “and you shall be sent away as soon as possible—say, will you consent?”

“The whole thousand dollars?”

“Every one of them.”

“Then give me the powder.”

“Stay a little,” replied the friar, who went out and, in about ten minutes, returned with an answer to our hero's letter and a paper containing a grayish powder.

"Give him this in his soup or anything—spread it on his meat, or mix it up with his sugar if he eats an orange."

"I see," replied Mesty.

"The dollars shall be yours. I swear it on the holy cross."

Mesty grinned horribly, took the letter and the powder, and then asked, "When I come again?"

"As soon as you have received the money, bring it to me at Don Rebiera's—then give the powder: as soon as it is given, you must let me know, for you must not remain in Palermo. I will myself conduct you to a place of safety."

Muttering that the priest was a d—d rascal, Mesty soon arrived at the barracks, and repeated the whole of the conference between him and the priest.

"It must be poison of course," said Gascoigne; "suppose we try it upon some animal?"

"No, Master Gascoigne," said Mesty, "I try it myself by-and-by. Now what shall we do?"

The friar, in his letter, agrees to assist Jack's cause for the sum mentioned. It was at last decided that the money should be given to Mesty; but that Mesty should state, when he took the money to the friar, that he had administered the powder, and claim it when he presented it.

The next day the order for the money was given to Mesty, and he went to Thomaso with it. The latter hastened with Mesty to the monastery and sent for the interpreter.

"You have given it?" asked the friar.

"Yes—not one hour ago. Here is the order for the money."

"You must run for the money before he is dead, for the powder is very rapid."



“And me,” replied Mesty, apparently much alarmed, “where am I to go?”

“As soon as you bring the money here, you must hasten to the barracks. Remain there till he is dead and then return here. I will have all ready, and take you, as soon as it is dusk, to a monastery of our order in the mountains, where you may remain in safe hiding; and then I will find you a passage in some vessel out of the island.”

Mesty did as directed. It was agreed that he should go with the friar, who would probably remain away for some time; indeed, Mesty insisted upon so doing. Mesty stayed about two hours, and then returned to the monastery about dusk, and reported the death of our hero. He remained there until it was dark, and then the friar ordered him to tie the bag of dollars to his saddlebow. They mounted two mules, which stood ready, and quitted Palermo.

In the morning, Don Philip, as usual, made his appearance and told our hero that the friar had been summoned away by the abbot and would not return for some time. Then he proposed that they should be removed to his father's palazzo where Jack might plead his cause. Jack now showed him the friar's letter and told him the whole story. Don Philip was silent for a moment and said; “I am sorry for your black, for you will never see him again. A thousand dollars would sign the death-warrants of a thousand blacks; but there is another reason—they will put him out of the way that he may not give evidence. Where is the powder?”

“Mesty has it; he would not part with it.”

"He is a shrewd fellow, that black; he may be too much for the friar," replied Don Philip. He presently asked, "Are you sure that he went?"

"No, I am not; but the friar told him that he should take him to the mountains as soon as it was dark."

"And probably he will," replied Don Philip, "as the best place to get rid of him. Give me a copy of the letter so that my mother's eyes may be opened."

The report of the accident which had occurred to Easy and his friend had been spread and fully believed throughout Palermo. Agnes alone had been let into the secret. Two days after Don Philip had made his parents acquainted with the villainy of the friar, the midshipmen were removed to the palazzo, much to the renown of the surgeon. Don Rebiera was also now let into the secret and the old lady was again in favour of Jack, declaring that she would never more have a confessor in the house. All their alarm now was about Mesty, for whose return they were most anxious.

Jack formally made known his intentions to Don Rebiera, who made it a condition that he should get his father's consent, notwithstanding Jack's argument that there was no need for it, as his father had not consulted him when he married.

On the fourth evening after their removal to the palazzo, when sitting in their room, a friar entered, who soon turned out to be Mesty. His was a long story, the purport of which was that the friar had died of his own poison and Mesty, on his return, had the good luck to fall in with Don Silvio as the leader of a band of robbers, and to knife him and escape. The death of the friar was a serious

thing—for the priests were a powerful body—and it was considered necessary that he and the two midshipmen should depart at once. A vessel was chartered for Malta and they set sail in a few hours.

### CHAPTER XXIII

#### JACK LEAVES THE SERVICE IN WHICH HE HAD NO BUSINESS AND GOES HOME TO MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS

ON the fourth day they arrived at Malta, and were welcomed by the Governor. After dinner Jack told him of all that the reader knows. Telling them that he must talk to them seriously the next day, they were dismissed for the day.

The next morning the packet<sup>1</sup> from England carrying mail arrived, and there were two letters for Jack with black seals.

The first was from his father, telling him of his mother's death, with remarks about her and himself and his work regarding equality and the rights of man, which made Jack conclude that his father was mad. He felt the loss of his mother whom he loved, and it was not till half an hour had elapsed that he opened the other letter. It was from Dr Middleton.

“MY DEAR BOY,

“Although not a correspondent of yours, I take the right of having watched you through all your childhood, and from a knowledge of your disposition, to write a few lines. It was I who advised, your going away for curing you of your father's foolish philosophy, and I am sure that,

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1. mail boat.

as a young man of sense and the heir to a large property, you will before this have seen the fallacy of your father's doctrines. Your father tells me that he has requested you to come home, and allow me to add my weight in persuading you to do the same. It is fortunate for you that the estate is entailed,<sup>1</sup> or you might soon be a beggar. He has already been dismissed from the magistracy by the lord lieutenant, in consequence of his haranguing<sup>2</sup> the discontented peasantry, and, I may say, exciting them to acts of violence and insubordination. He has turned away his keepers, and allowed all poachers to go over the manor. In short he is not in his senses; and I consider it is absolutely necessary that you should immediately return home and look after what will one day be your property. You have no occasion to follow the profession with eight thousand pounds per annum. You have distinguished yourself—now make room for those who require it for their subsistence.<sup>3</sup> God bless you. I shall soon hope to shake hands with you.

Yours most truly,

G. MIDDLETON."

There was matter for deep reflection in these two letters, and Jack never felt before how much his father had been in the wrong. For a long while Jack was in a melancholy meditation, and then casting his eyes upon his watch, he perceived that it was dinner time. He spoke little at dinner, and retired as soon as it was over, presenting his two letters to the Governor, and asking his advice for the

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1. settled permanently so that it cannot be altered.

2. making vehement speech to.

3. livelihood.

next morning. Gascoigne followed him and to him he confided his trouble; and Ned, finding that Jack was very low-spirited, consoled him to the best of his power. Before they retired to bed, Jack had given his ideas to his friend, which were approved of, and wishing him good night, he threw himself into bed and was soon fast asleep.

"One thing is certain, my good fellow," said the Governor to our hero, as he gave him back his letters at the breakfast table the next morning; "that your father is as mad as a March hare. I agree with that doctor, who appears a sensible man, that you had better go home immediately. I think I may venture to say that I can arrange all that matter at once, without referring to admiral or captain. I will be responsible for you, and you may go home in the packet which sails on Wednesday for England."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas, I am much obliged to you," replied Jack.

"You, Mr Gascoigne, I shall, of course, send out by the first opportunity to rejoin your ship."

"Thank you, Sir Thomas, I am much obliged to you," replied Gascoigne, making a bow.

"You'll break no more arms, if you please, sir," continued the Governor; "a man in love may have some excuse for breaking his leg, but you had none."

"I beg your pardon, sir; if Mr Easy was justified in breaking his leg out of love, I submit that I could do no less than break my arm out of friendship."

The Governor laughed in good humour, but pointed out seriously that, as Gascoigne was not independent of the service, he should be more steady.

At the request of Jack the Governor promised to send Mesty with Jack, who would get his discharge as soon as he reached home. They then went to their rooms to make their arrangements.

"The Governor is right," said Gascoigne; "it is better we part, Jack. You have half unfitted me for the service already; I have a disgust of the midshipman's berth. This is all wrong and we must part; but I hope you never will forget me."

"My hand upon it, Ned. Command my interest, if I have any—my money—what I have, and the house, whether it belongs to my father or to me—as far as you are concerned at least, I adhere to my notions of perfect equality."

"That is sufficient; you don't know how glad it makes me hear you say so."

Mesty's delight at leaving the service and going home with his patron was indescribable. He laid out a portion of his gold in a suit of plain clothes, white linen shirts—in fact he was now a complete gentleman's gentleman.

The day for sailing arrived. Jack took his leave of the Governor, thanking him for his great kindness and stating his intention of taking Malta on his way out to Palermo in a month or two. Gascoigne went on board with him, and did not go down the vessel's side till it was more than a mile clear of the harbour.

## CHAPTER XXIV

IN WHICH JACK RETURNS HOME, HIS FATHER'S WONDERFUL INVENTION IS EXPLAINED AND JACK HAS HIS OWN WAY

AT last the packet anchored in Falmouth Roads. Jack, accompanied by Mesty, was soon on shore with his luggage

threw himself into the mail, arrived in London, and equipping himself with proper clothes; ordered a chaise to Forest Hill. He had not written to his father to announce his arrival, and it was late in the morning when the chaise drew up at his father's door.

Jack stepped out and rang the bell. The servants who opened the door were new, and did not know him.

"Who are you?" asked one of the men in a gruff tone, to a question of Jack's.

"By the powers, you will very soon find out who he is, observed Mesty.

"Stay here, and I'll see if Mr Easy is at home."

"Stay here! stay in the hall like a footman? What do you mean, you rascal?" cried Jack, attempting to push by the man.

"Oh, that won't do here, master; this is Equality Hall; one man is as good as another."

"Not always," replied Jack, knocking him down. "Take that for your insolence, pack up your traps,<sup>1</sup> and walk out of the house tomorrow morning."

Mesty in the meantime had seized the other by the throat.

"What shall I do with this fellow, Master Easy?"

"Leave him now, Mesty; we'll settle their account tomorrow morning. I presume I shall find my father in the library."

"His father!" said one of the men to the other; "he's not exactly a chip of the old block."

"We shall have a change, I expect," replied the other, as they walked away.

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1. (pl.) baggage.

"Mesty," cried Jack, in an authoritative tone, "bring those two rascals back to take the luggage out of the chaise; pay the postilion<sup>1</sup> and tell the housekeeper to show you my room and yours. Then come to me for orders."

Mesty at once turned to the servants with his filed teeth and a savage look, which had the desired effect. The men sullenly returned and unloaded the chaise.

In the meantime Jack walked into his father's study, and what he saw there astonished him. His father was there, but so busy with a plaster cast of a human head that he did not even perceive the entrance of his son. The cast of the skull was divided into many compartments, with writing on each. The book-cases and books had all been removed, and in the centre, suspended from the ceiling, was an apparatus which would have puzzled any one composed of rods in every direction, with screws at the end of them, and also tubes in equal number, one of which communicated with a large air-pump, which stood on a table. After a short survey he walked up to his father and addressed him.

"What!" exclaimed Mr Easy, "is it possible? yes, it is my son John! I am glad to see you—very glad indeed," continued the old gentleman, shaking him by both hands: "very glad that you have come home. I wanted you—your assistance in my great project which, I thank Heaven, is now advancing rapidly. Very soon shall equality and the rights of man be proclaimed everywhere. King, lords, and aristocrats; landholders, tithe-collectors, church and state, thank God, will soon be overthrown, and the

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1. one who rides the near horse of the leaders or the near horse when one pair is used without driver on box.



golden age revived—the millennium,<sup>1</sup> the true millennium. I am at the head of twenty-nine societies, and if my health lasts, you will see what I will accomplish now with your assistance, Jack ;” and Mr Easy’s eyes flashed.

Jack sighed, and to turn the conversation he asked if the machine was to improve equality and the rights of man.

“My dear son,” replied Mr Easy, sitting down and crossing his legs, as he used to do when much pleased with himself, “that is not exactly the case, and yet you have shown perception in your guess. For if my invention succeeds, and I have no doubt of it, I shall have discovered the great art of rectifying the mistakes of nature, and giving an equality of organisation to the whole species, of introducing all the finer organs of humanity and of destroying the baser. They may talk of Gall<sup>2</sup> and Spurzheim, and all those ; but what have they done ? nothing but divided the brain into sections, classed the organs, and discovered where they reside ; but what good resulted from that ? The murderer by nature remained a murderer—the benevolent man a benevolent man. I have found out how to change all that.”

“Surely, sir, you would not interfere with the organ of benevolence ?”

“But indeed I must, Jack. I myself am suffering from its being too large. I have, therefore, put myself into that machine every morning for two hours, for these last three

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1. : period of Christ’s reign on earth : hence ‘golden age.’

2. Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) was a famous German physician and the founder of phrenology.

months, and I feel now that I am daily losing a great portion."

And he quoted his butler as the instance of a murderer upon whom he was experimenting: "I selected him on purpose; I have flattened down murder to nothing, and I have raised benevolence till it's like a wen.<sup>1</sup>"

Jack referred to the insolence of the servants, and requested him to come out, for he wished to have some refreshment.

"Certainly, Jack. Complain of my servants, say you?—there must be some mistake—they are all shaved, and wear wigs, and I put them in the machine every other morning; but I mean to make an alteration in one respect. You observe, Jack, it requires more dignity: we must raise the whole machinery some feet, ascend it with state as a throne, for it is the throne of reason, the victory of mind over nature."

They now went into the drawing-room and rang the bell; not being answered, Jack rose and rang again.

"My dear sir," observed Mr Easy, "you must not be in a hurry; every man naturally provides for his own wants first and afterwards for those of others. Now my servants—"

"Are a set of insolent scoundrels, sir. I knocked one down as I entered your house—"

"My dear son," exclaimed Mr Easy, "you knocked my servant down! Are you not aware by the laws of equality—"

"I am aware of this, my dear father," replied Jack, "that

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1. (more or less permanent) tumour (swelling) on scalp.

by all the laws of society we have a right to expect civility from those we pay and feed."

"Pay and feed! Why, my dear Jack—you must recollect—"

"I recollect, sir, very well; but if your servants do not come to their recollection in a very short time, either I or they must quit the house."

"But, my dear boy, have you forgotten the principles I instilled into you? Do you not acknowledge and support my philosophy?"

"We'll argue that point tomorrow, sir—at present I want to obtain my supper;" and Jack rang the bell furiously.

The butler made his appearance at this last summons, and he was followed by Mesty, who looked like a demon in anger.

"Mercy on me, whom have we here?"

Jack told him he was his servant and, turning to Mesty, asked him to see that the butler brought him supper and wine immediately and, in case he refused, throw him out. Mesty hastened to obey; and his father also asked him to do so in a tone he had never before heard. The butler quitted the room, followed by the Ashantee.<sup>1</sup>

"That you, my son, so carefully brought up in the great and glorious school of philosophy, should behave this way—forget your sublime philosophy and all—just like Esau,<sup>2</sup> selling your birth-right for a mess of pottage. O Jack, you'll kill me! and yet I love you, Jack—whom else have I to love in this world? Never mind, we'll argue the point,

1. native of Ashanti, W. Africa.

2. See *Genesis*, xxv. 29-34.

my boy—I'll convince you—in a week all will be all right again."

"It shall, sir, if I can manage it."

"That's right, I love to hear you say so—that's consoling, very consoling—but I think now I was wrong to let you go to sea, Jack."

"Indeed you were not, father."

Just then the butler, followed by Mesty, made his appearance with the tray, laid it down in a sulky manner and retired. Mesty remained and was asked by Jack how the servants were getting on.

"Regular mutiny, sir," replied he, "all swear that they do not stand our nonsense, and that we both leave the house tomorrow."

"Do you hear, sir, your servants declare that I shall leave your house tomorrow."

"You leave my house, Jack, after four years' absence! I'll reason with them—I'll make them a speech. You don't know how I can speak, Jack."

"Look you, father, I cannot stand this; either give me a *carte-blanc*<sup>1</sup> to arrange this household as I please, or I shall quit it myself tomorrow morning."

"Quit my house, Jack! no, no—shake hands with them; be civil, and they will serve you—but you know the principles—"

"Principles of the devil!" cried Jack in a rage. "In one word, sir, do you consent, or am I to leave the house?"

"Leave the house! Oh, no. I have no son but you. Then, do as you please—but you must not send away my

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1. full discretionary power.

murderer, for I must have him cured and shown as a proof of my wonderful invention."

The servants were immediately informed of the change in management, and Jack went to bed, determined to set things right without loss of time.

## CHAPTER XXV

### IN WHICH JACK PROVES THAT HE CAN ARGUE ON THE OTHER SIDE

THE next morning Jack rose early and Mesty was in the room, with warm water, as soon as he rang. He desired Mesty to send one of the grooms up to him. When the latter came, Jack asked him to ride over to Dr Middleton and request his immediate attendance. Then man hastened away on his errand.

Jack went down to breakfast, but did not find his father. So he went to the study, and found him occupied with a carpenter, who was making a sort of frame as the model of the platform to be raised under the wonderful invention. Mr. Easy was so busy that he could not come to breakfast; so Jack took his alone.

An hour after this Dr Middleton's carriage drove up to the door. The doctor heartily greeted our hero and sat down to breakfast as he had come away in haste.

They then talked over Jack's affairs and came to the conclusion that Jack should get a power of attorney from his father to take charge of the property. He must first literally set his house in order, and therefore said, "I really should take it as a great favour, Dr Middleton, if you could stay here a day or two. I know that you have retired from practice."

"I would have made the same offer, my young friend. I will come with two of my servants, for you must discharge these."

"I have one of my own, who is worth his weight in gold. I will dismiss every man you think I ought, and as for the women, we can give them warning, and replace them at leisure."

"That is exactly what I should propose," replied the doctor.

"I will now go, if you please, to procure the assistance of a couple of constables, and also of your father's former legal adviser, who shall prepare a power of attorney."

"Yes," replied Jack, "and we must then find out the tenants who refuse to pay upon the principles of equality, and he shall serve them with notice."

The doctor rejoiced in Jack's abandonment of his father's principles, and departed, promising to return in a short time. In the forenoon Dr Middleton again made his appearance, accompanied by Mr Hanson, the solicitor, bringing with him his portmanteau and his servants. Mr Easy was then at breakfast and received them coolly. But a little judicious praise of his wonderful invention had its due effect: and after Jack had reminded him of his promise that in future he was to control the household, he was easily persuaded to sign the order for his so doing—that is, the power of attorney.

Mr Hanson soon possessed himself of the books, papers, and receipts necessary to ascertain the state of his affairs, and the rents which had not yet been paid up. In the meantime the constables arrived. The servants were all assembled; Mr Hanson showed them the power of attor-

ney, and in less than half an hour afterwards all the men-servants, but two grooms, were dismissed. The presence of the constables and Mesty prevented any resistance, but not without various threats on the part of the butler whose name was O'Rourke.

Mr Easy took no notice of anything and returned to his study and his wonderful invention. Mesty had received the keys of the cellar and had now complete control over those who remained. The doctor, Mr Hanson, Mr Easy and Jack sat down to dinner and everything wore the appearance of order and comfort. Mr Easy ate heartily, and after dinner was over he began, as was his custom, to argue upon the truth and soundness of his philosophy.

"Let us fill our glasses," cried Mr Easy triumphantly. "I will bring Jack to the proper way of thinking. Now then, my son, I trust you will not deny that we are all born equal."

"I do deny it, sir," replied Jack; "I deny it in toto<sup>1</sup>—I deny it from the evidence of our own senses, and from the authority of Scripture. To suppose all men were born equal is to suppose that they are equally endowed with the same strength and with the same capacity of mind, which we know is not the case. I deny it from Scripture, from which I could quote many passages, but restrict myself to one—the parable of the talents:<sup>2</sup> 'To one he gave five talents, to another but one,' holding them responsible for the trust reposed in them. We are all

1. completely.

2. See *Matthew*, xxy, 14-30. A 'talent' was an ancient money of account of varying value. (Greek = £ 245, 13s.)

intended to fill various situations in society and are provided by Heaven accordingly."

"Granting that there might be some diversity,<sup>1</sup>" said his father, "that is different from the present monstrous state of society, in which we have kings and lords and people, while others are in a state of pauperism and obliged to steal for their daily bread."

"Let us argue the point, father, coolly. Were all equal in beauty, there would be no beauty, for beauty is only by comparison—were all equal in strength, conflicts would be interminable—were all equal in rank, and power, and possessions, the greatest charms of existence would be destroyed—generosity, gratitude, and half the finer virtues would be unknown. The first principle of our religion, charity, could not be practised—pity would never be called forth—benevolence, your great organ, would be useless, and self-denial a blank letter. Were all equal in ability, there would be no instruction, no talent—no genius—nothing to admire, to copy or to respect. Why, father, what an idle, unprofitable, weary world would this be, if it were based on equality?"

"I will say you argue well in a bad cause, but why should the inequality be carried so far? king and lords, for instance."

"Could you prove that those at the summit possess the greatest share of happiness in this world, then, indeed, you have a position to argue on. But it is well known that such is not the case; and, provided he is of a contented mind, the peasant is more happy than the king, surrounded as he is by cares and anxiety."

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1. variety.



"Very well argued, my dear sir," observed Dr. Middleton, who asked Mr Easy if he had anything to reply.

"To reply, sir?" replied Mr. Easy with scorn: "why, he has not given me half an argument yet; why, that black servant even laughs at him—look at him there, showing his teeth. Can he forget the horrors of slavery? No, sir, he has suffered, and he can estimate the divine right of equality. Ask him if you dare, Jack, whether he will admit the truth of your argument."

"Well, I'll ask him," replied Jack, "and I tell you candidly that he was once one of your disciples. Mesty, what's your opinion of equality?"

"Equality, Master Easy?" replied Mesty, pulling up his cravat; "I say d—n equality, now I am major domo.<sup>1</sup>"

"The rascal deserves to be a slave all his life."

"True, I have been a slave—but I was a prince in my own country—Master Easy will tell you how many skulls I had."

"Skulls—skulls—do you **know** anything of the sublime science? Are you a phrenologist?"<sup>2</sup>

"I know a man's skull very well in Ashantee country."

"Then if you know that, you must be one. I had no idea that the science extended so far—may be it was brought from thence. I will have some talk with you tomorrow. This is very curious, Dr Middleton, is it not?"

"Very, indeed, Mr Easy."

"I shall feel his head tomorrow after breakfast, and correct it with my machine, if need be. By the bye, I have

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1. loosely, house-steward.

2. one who has studied phrenology (=study of formation of cranium or skull as index to development).

quite forgotten, gentlemen; you will excuse me, but I wish to see the carpenter, and after that I shall attend the meeting of the society."

Mr Easy then quitted the room.

The lawyer now told Jack that £14,000 was still in arrears by way of rent. He asked the other to take immediate steps to recover the amount.

When they rose to retire, the doctor took our hero by the hand.

"You do not know, my dear fellow, what pleasure it gives me to find that, in spite of the doting of your mother and the madness of your father, you have turned out so well. It is very fortunate that you have come home. I trust that you will now give up the profession."

"I have given it up, sir; which reminds me that I have not yet applied for either my discharge or that of my servant. But I cannot spare time yet, so I shall not report myself."

## CHAPTER XXVI

IN WHICH JACK FINDS HIMSELF AN ORPHAN, GIVES UP THE SEA, MARRIES AND SETTLES DOWN IN HIS FATHER'S HOME

THE next morning when they met at breakfast, Mr Easy did not make his appearance, and Jack enquired of Mesty where he was. "They say down below that the old gentleman did not come home last night."

This made them anxious and they at once repaired to his study. Here they beheld a spectacle which made them recoil with horror. There was Mr Easy with his head in the machine, the platform below fallen from under him, hanging, with his toes just touching the ground.

Dr Middleton hastened to him, and assisted by Mesty and our hero, took him out of the steel collar which was round his neck. Life had been extinct for many hours.

It was surmised<sup>1</sup> that Mr Easy, who had had the machine raised four feet higher for the platform and steps to be placed underneath, must have mounted on the frame modelled by the carpenter for his work, and have fixed his head in. The framework, hastily put together, had given way with his weight and the sudden fall had killed him.

Mr. Hanson led away Jack, who was much shocked at this unfortunate end of his father, while Dr Middleton ordered the body to be taken up into the bedroom and immediately despatched a messenger to the coroner<sup>2</sup> of the county.

The few days of sorrow and closed shutters must be passed over. The coroner's inquest and the funeral over, our hero found himself in possession of a splendid property and his own master. He wanted nine months to be of age, and on opening the will of his father he found that Dr Middleton was his sole guardian. The doctor wrote to the Admiralty, informing them that family affairs necessitated Mr John Easy, who had been left at sick quarters, to leave his Majesty's service, requesting his discharge from it. The Admiralty was graciously pleased to grant the request and also to grant the discharge of Mesty on payment of the sum required for a substitute.

The gamekeepers were restored, the preserves cleared of all poachers, and the gentry of the county were not a

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1. conjectured.

2. officer of county, etc. holding inquest on bodies of persons dying by violence or accident.

little pleased at Jack's succession, for they had wished that Mr Easy's neck had been broken long ago. The societies were dissolved, since, now that there was no one to pay for the beer, there was nothing to meet for. Cards and compliments were sent from all parts of the county, and every one was anxious that our hero should come of age, as then he would be able to marry, give dinners, subscribe to the fox-hounds, and live as a gentleman ought to do.

The rest of the story is soon told. He purchased a sloop and after a few adventures reached Palermo. A month after his arrival he was married to Agnes. A few days afterwards they started homeward with Don Philip and his brother, and remaining a fortnight at Malta with the Governor, arrived home without any incident. The vessel was sold and the men paid off.

Jack, who was now of age, invited all within twenty miles of home to balls and dinners; became a great favourite, kept a pack of hounds, rode with the foremost, received a deputation to stand for the county as a conservative, was elected, and took his seat in parliament. Don Philip and his brother, after two months' stay, took their passage back to Palermo, fully satisfied with the prospects of their sister as to competence and happiness. Jack had no occasion to argue the point with Agnes, for she conformed at once to the religion of her husband and proved an excellent and affectionate wife.

Mesty held his post with dignity, and proved himself trustworthy. Gascoigne, by the interest of the conservative member, soon obtained the rank of post-captain and was always his devoted and sincere friend. And thus ends the history of Mr Midshipman Easy.

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