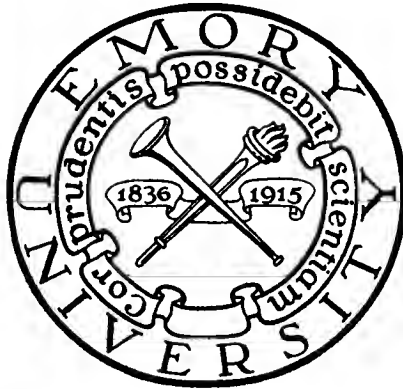


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RALPH RUTHERFORD.

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VOL. III.

RALPH RUTHERFORD.

A NAUTICAL ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE PETREL,"

&c., &c.

"Safe am I arrived in haven, a weather-beaten but experienced shipman, enabled to indicate the hidden rocks and quicksands of this life's perturbed shores. Often have I struck, often been wrecked, but never foundered. Possible, though little probable, are future storms."

MEMOIRS OF BARON FREDERIC TRENCK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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RALPH RUTHERFORD.

CHAPTER I.

GREAT was the alarm caused by this sudden and ill-omened apparition at the very moment in which our passengers, now in sight of the British coast, were congratulating themselves upon the termination of all their dangers and difficulties, and debating where they had better land.

The poor girls, bitterly disappointed, retired to the cabin in a sad state of dejection, whilst the gentlemen assembled in council on the poop.

“It is assuredly the same vessel, confound her!” said Captain Thompson, as he withdrew his glass from the hateful object, “and she nears us fast. I expect every moment that she will fire at us, to make us bring to.”

“She will hardly do that,” said Shuldham, “for the fog in the offing may conceal some British cruizer. She will be anxious to do her work as quietly as possible. Let us fire our guns. They may bring some man-of-war to our aid.”

“You are right,” said Captain Thompson. “Mr. Harris, get the guns ready with blank cartridge!”

The ‘Trelawney’ began to fire minute guns, but the brigantine closed fast with her.

“Ship a-hoy!” said a rough voice in perfectly good English. “If you fire another gun I will pour a broadside of grape into you. Heave-to immediately, or I fire!”

The privateer was now close to the ship. Her decks were full of men, and resistance was out of the question, as she could have laid her on board. The 'Trelawney' therefore brought-to, and a boat was lowered from the privateer.

Shuldham entered the cabin for one minute.

“You had better remain here, Mr. Carteret, with the ladies,” he said. “I will put on my uniform, which will enable me to treat advantageously with these people. I speak their language readily, and will endeavour to stipulate that none of them shall enter the cabin.”

“I fear,” said Mr. Carteret, as he withdrew, “our young friend will hardly accomplish his object; but as Captain Thompson will certainly be sent on board the privateer, Shuldham's presence in his uniform will be some protection, and he has temper as

well as skill, both of which he will amply need."

Uncle Peter expressed great confidence in Shuldham, for which, even in that moment of trouble, Laura thanked him in her heart.

There was no time to be lost, for scarcely had Shuldham donned his uniform and regained the deck, when a boatful of noisy and disorderly French privateersmen were alongside. In an instant the deck swarmed with them.

One seized the helm, and another, who was apparently an officer, began to prepare for making sail, but with much noise and confusion. The Captain of the 'Trelawney,' his mates and some others, were called upon to descend into the privateer's boat, but the Captain was directed to take his papers with him, and he entered the cabin to seek them.

Some deference was paid to Shuldham's

uniform, especially when they found that he spoke their language well.

“I am a passenger,” he said to the officer in command, “and have my family on board; I pledge myself that if none of your people enter the cabin no resistance shall be made, and no trouble given to you. Assure me upon this point, and I will answer for the crew and passengers.”

This proposal was readily acceded to by the officer, and Shuldham took his stand close to the cabin door, to preserve it inviolate. The conversation was partly overheard by Mr. Carteret inside the cabin, but the noise, confusion, and clatter of so many tongues, as the Frenchmen all talked together, and all seemingly in anger, was not calculated to inspire confidence. Occasionally a swaggering Frenchman approached the cabin door, but Shuldham was heard remonstrating, and with effect. He laughed with them,

and joked with them, but pertinaciously defended the cabin door.

Captain Thompson had passed through the cabin to the state room. He was exceedingly hurried and depressed, and to the many questions put to him by the Carterets, he replied that Shuldham had made good use of his uniform, but that it was his perfect knowledge of their language that availed him most.

But a loud discussion soon arose at the door, and high words passed, followed by a sort of scuffle, when Shuldham's voice was heard in anger. A ruffianly Frenchman using dreadful language, and defying his officer, persisted in entering the cabin, under pretext of dragging forth the Captain, whose delay excited a good deal of irritation. Mr. Carteret's great fear now was that, provoked by Shuldham's continued interference, they would insist upon taking him out of the

ship; for he felt assured that, gentle as his young friend was, he would resist such an attempt to the death.

Shuldham meanwhile, greatly exasperated, was heard threatening the noisy ruffian who was still bent upon entering the cabin; and planting himself before the door, resolutely refused him access.

“Remember,” he said, “you have the channel to cross yet, and I dare you to attempt any act of violence.”

The poor girls, who had joined their father from the inner cabin, heard all this, and comprehended much more of it than Mr. Carteret did, shuddering with apprehension, not for themselves, but for Shuldham, when the Frenchman, showering terrible curses upon him, called upon his comrades to throw the Englishman neck and heels into the boat.

At length Captain Thompson came forth

with his papers, which for the moment removed all pretext for violence. But Shuldham had seen enough of the insincerity of the officer, or of his want of authority, and of the insubordination of the men, to feel assured that when they found themselves in full possession of the ship, and steering for the coast of France, his compact for the immunity of the cabin would not be regarded. This caused him great anxiety. Mr. Carteret was desirous to go on deck to support and restrain Shuldham, but the terrified girls clung to him, entreating him not to leave them. Uncle Peter had been for some time suffering from gout, and could with difficulty move, but the doctor, who had been in his cabin preparing for being plundered—for he had been taken by a privateer once before—no sooner heard the state of the case than he volunteered his services.

Nothing could exceed the confusion in which the doctor found things. All were giving orders, and no one executing them, while profane oaths and coarse jests resounded on every side. The Captain, who had been so clamorously called for, stood now with his mates on the gangway, ready to enter the boat, but they no longer seemed to trouble themselves about him, and the fellow who had disputed the cabin door with Shuldham, was now wrangling with his own officer, and both seemed to forget everything else in their violent abuse of each other.

“A pretty set of scamps we shall have to deal with, Seacombe,” said Shuldham, in great wrath; “but you and I can guard these doors, and they do not yet feel confidence enough in their own position to dare much. We shall only have to deal with a lawless ruffian or two for the present.”

“You must keep your temper,” replied his friend. “Mr. Carteret is more alarmed about your taking violent measures than at anything else just now; for they might put you out of the ship, and what would be our situation then? The thought of this alarms the ladies.”

Shuldham promised to be cautious; but they were interrupted by such a din of shouting, cursing, and screaming amongst their unwelcome visitors, as foreboded some great change.

“Confound the scoundrels, Seacombe!” said Shuldham; “I believe they are going to get up a battle royal amongst themselves.”

“What can this mean?” observed Mr. Carteret, who listened attentively. “Whatever it may be, neither Shuldham nor Seacombe take any part in it.”

The privateer now hailed the ‘Trelawney,’ and ordered her boat to return immediately.

A *sauve qui peut* followed. All rushed for the boat, the English prisoners on the gangway were left to their own devices, and some of the Frenchmen who had been plundering below, were left to the mercy of the enraged seamen of the 'Trelawney.' In vain they rushed on deck, screaming and vociferating to their companions to return for them: it was every one for himself.

Shuldham looked around him. He entertained no doubt of the cause of this sudden retreat, and he soon saw a large vessel looming through the fog. He rushed into the cabin with the joyful intelligence; for the manœuvres of the brigantine told him what the stranger was, as she had made sail directly, not even waiting for her boat, which was within a stone's throw of her, and but for the confusion that prevailed, might have caught a rope which was thrown to her.

Shuldham returned hastily to the deck. The large ship, clearly a man-of-war, was now distinctly seen through the fog. She had heard their signals of distress, and was standing directly towards them — indeed, would almost fetch them.

“An English frigate!” he called down the skylight. “We are now safe.”

Mr. Carteret clasped his daughters to his heart.

“God be thanked and praised for this gracious deliverance!” he said, and earnestly did they respond to his thanksgiving.

“Shuldham,” said Julia, looking at her sister, “is always the bearer of good news. Poor fellow, how stoutly he battled for us with that noisy ruffian!”

They all went upon deck; the brigantine, thoroughly alarmed, had made all sail on the starboard tack, standing over for the coast of France. She was well to windward,

and out of gun-shot from the frigate, which hoisted her English colours, and Captain Thompson, once more his own master, joyfully displayed his red ensign.

“I am afraid,” said Shuldham to Mr. Carteret, “the fellow will escape; at least the frigate cannot fetch within gun-shot of him. Suppose, Captain Thompson, we run down to the frigate? She must send a boat here, and we shall be of some use in that way.”

The Captain ordered the helm to be put up. It was a grateful and most exhilarating sight to those so lately in jeopardy, to see their enemy flying, and the boat, whose ruffianly crew had so lately and so insolently been domineering over them, now helpless, deserted, and ready to surrender to the first who should hail her.

As the frigate approached the ‘Trelawney,’ she luffed up in the wind, to deaden her

headway, and lowered a boat. Then, filling again, stood on in pursuit of the privateer.

“ Look there, to windward,” said Shuldham ; “ the fog is clearing up, and there is a black corvette to windward of the brigantine, and we shall have her yet. By Heaven, it is the ‘ Goelan ! ’ ” he exclaimed ; “ then the frigate must be the ‘ Boadicea,’ for I heard that the ‘ Goelan ’ formed part of a small squadron going to cruize to the westward, under the orders of Captain Merivale. Ay ! and there’s a brig astern of the ‘ Boadicea.’ ”

They all turned to look at the frigate which was supposed to contain Ralph Rutherford ; but her boat soon became the object of more immediate interest.

Shuldham pointed his telescope to the boat, which was now close at hand, but as the ‘ Trelawney ’ rounded to for her, he lost sight of the boat for a moment, and again as she emerged from under the

‘Trelawney’s’ bows, he looked earnestly at her. She was now very near.

“’Tis Ralph himself,” he cried. “’Tis Ralph Rutherford,” he repeated down the sky-light.

Mr. Carteret sprang off the poop with almost boyish agility, to announce the joyful intelligence to his daughters, who had retired to the cabin, as soon as they had heard that it was the ‘Boadicea.’

But Shuldham’s familiar voice, to which they had so recently strained their sense of hearing, in terror and alarm, had already reached them, and tears of joy flowed down those cheeks, so lately paled by fear, as they passed almost at a bound, from the deepest affliction, and well-grounded alarm, to extreme joy.

Mr. Carteret returned to the deck to receive his favourite, once more his deliverer; whilst uncle Peter wept like a

child, and forgetting his gout, rushed forward to welcome Rutherford.

Ralph was deeply moved. He had thought it possible, by comparing dates, that it might be the 'Trelawney,' or at least one of the convoy, but had hardly dared to hope that such happiness awaited him, as to be assured before he quitted the British shores, that the friends so dear to him were safe. He had asked to be permitted to take charge of the boat, in hope at least of hearing something of them, and he was now in the midst of them. He expressed his delight at seeing the Carterets and Shuldham, but his eyes sought something more. His faithful, his considerate friend, as he returned the warm grasp of Ralph's hand, pointed to the cabin door.

"Go, go to the cabin," he said; "all is well now. I am in uniform, and will see to your duties here."

Mr. Carteret led the way. This was no time for reserves, moments were precious, and amply did Ralph's reception repay him for all past sorrows. The scene was well adapted to warm the generous heart of the high-minded Julia. He seized her not unwilling hand, and pressed it passionately to his lips; and when she raised her glistening eyes to her father, he was looking on with pride and delight. At this auspicious moment, Jemima rushed from the inner cabin of her young mistress.

“Oh! Massa Rutfut,” she exclaimed, “bless you, we always wish for Massa Rutfut when trouble come. We always talk Massa Rutfut, don't we, Miss July, dear.”

Rutherford stopped the torrent of Jemima's revelations, which, however grateful to him, had brought a bright flush to Julia's cheek. He took the faithful creature by the hand, and spoke kindly to her, for he knew her

value, and her devoted attachment to his Julia; then turning to Mr. Carteret:

“My dear Sir,” he said, “pardon my presumption. My stay here must be very short, and I may even be summoned away whilst I speak. Permit me, I beseech you, to bear away with me a hope that you will permit me to devote the remainder of my life to one whom I have so long, so passionately loved.”

It is doubtful whether the fair Julia heard these words, which were spoken in a low, tremulous, but earnest tone, for she was in a bewildering state of embarrassment; but she certainly had a pretty accurate notion of their import, and she entered no protest.

Uncle Peter, who always claimed Julia as peculiarly his own, stepped forward, and having placed the hand of his adopted child within that of Ralph, said:

“He is worthy of you, my darling,” and

he turned to his brother for a confirmation.

“It would seem, my dear Rutherford,” said that gentleman, “that you are destined to be the protector of my child. May God bless you both ! I feel that I shall not long be with you—” he was too much affected to say more, but his last words gave a painful solemnity to the scene, and the brothers retired to a distant window.

Ralph having seated his fair betrothed, who appeared almost ready to faint, pressed her hand once more fondly to his lips, and taking from his neck an antique chain with a locket, he drew from it the mysterious pearl of great price, set in a plain gold ring, which he pressed gently upon the hand of the unresisting girl.

“It was the last solemn gift,” he said, addressing the father and uncle, “of my beloved mother, when I left her. There is an in-

teresting tale associated with this ring, and her last faltering accents were, 'Never part with this, but to place it on the hand of one who shall be worthy of you, of me, and of him who is no more. To find it otherwise disposed would break my heart.' I call you to witness that I have obeyed this command." And he once more pressed the hand of his betrothed fondly to his lips, then placed the chain round her neck.

Rarely has the sun shone upon a happier group: no words could have expressed Ralph's delight, nor did he attempt it. Alas, that such moments, snatched as it were from fate, should pass away so rapidly.

Shulldham entered the cabin, and Julia started when she beheld the dark cloud which suddenly overcast the bold and manly countenance she loved to look upon, and on which yet lingered traces of joy and happiness. She felt instinctively the fatal cause, as she beheld

the slow, unwilling advance of their devoted friend, to perform his ungracious task.

Ralph was seated by her, whilst the elders were still in conference at the window.

And was the scarcely-tasted cup of happiness to be dashed from her lips? Was Julia's still scarcely established confidence in the reality of what she saw and heard again to merge in doubts and fears?

"The few Frenchmen who were left on the hasty retreat of their boat, are drawn up on the quarter deck," said Shuldham. "The 'Boadicea' has telegraphed to the brig, to take charge of the 'Trelawney' and of the privateer's boat (fortunately I have a telegraph signal book), and the brig's boat with an officer will be here in ten minutes."

Ralph started at the sound of his friend's voice, as if awakened from a dream.

"And the chase?" he said.

“The brigantine cannot escape,” replied Shuldham, as he retired.

Mr. Carteret and uncle Peter had been roused from their discussion by the entrance of Shuldham, and perhaps they felt the object of his proceeding more clearly than did they who were most deeply concerned in it.

Mr. Carteret advanced, and taking Ralph by his hand, said :

“Ten thousand blessings upon you, my son. My heart refuses to acknowledge, as a mere cold casualty, this unexpected and most important meeting. It was the will of Him without whose fiat not a sparrow falls to the ground—of Him who rules all things for the best. ’Tis hard to be compelled to part so soon, so suddenly, but we must learn to view the matter in a different light. Let us be grateful that we have so critically met, and I feel confident we shall meet again under

happier circumstances when the stern call of duty shall not separate us.”

It is greatly to be feared that the young people did not at the moment derive quite so much consolation from this very sensible statement of the case as they ought to have done. It may even be doubted whether they understood it, so much were they wrapt in each other. Be that as it may, it is certain that Ralph, with all his self-discipline and all his recent determinations to be no more the slave of over-wrought feelings, had never in his life been so unwilling to listen to reason, and to yield to circumstances which he could not control; but when a man of this sort has once been driven from his stronghold of pride, the Fates seem to take pleasure in heaping aggravation after aggravation on the head of the struggling, fretful victim.

“The officer from the ‘Swift,’” said poor Shuldham, most unwillingly re-entering the

cabin, "has come to take charge of the ship."

But whilst we have been so fully occupied with our sympathies for poor Ralph, the gentlemen on deck have been deeply interested in a very different way. The fog gradually clearing away had shown the 'Goelan' broad upon the weather-quarter of the brigantine, who, so long as she had seen the frigate only, which was well to leeward of her, had entertained no doubt of escape. The case now was very different, as both ships were nearly within gun-shot of her, and the 'Goelan' setting a foretop-mast stunsail, and keeping a point off the wind, closed fast, whilst if she bore up she must fall under the guns of the frigate.

Dr. Seacomb enjoyed the dilemma of their late adversary exceedingly, as did Captain Thompson and Shuldham.

"Bang goes a gun," exclaimed the

Doctor: "that's right, Bromhead; he frightened us enough."

"He's jammed between the two," said Captain Thompson, "and can't escape."

"Another large ship steering down upon us," said the look-out man aloft.

"Another shot from Goelan."

"Ay!" said Captain Thompson, "and right through her foretopsail; she has nothing left for it now, thank God! Her career is stopped."

"She is bringing to," said Seacombe, "and won't carry you to France this trip, Captain Thompson."

Poor Ralph had listened to this storm of disturbing influences—mollified as they had been by Shuldham's tact and prudence—in an agony of annoyance. He dared not look upon Julia, but rose, and rushed upon deck, to resign his charge to the officer of the

‘Swift,’ and to introduce Captain Thompson formally to him.

“The privateer has shortened sail, and struck her colours,” reported Shuldham. “The ‘Boadicea’ has exchanged signals with a strange man-of-war, and has bore up to close with us. She has made the signal for her boat.”

This last was a heavy blow to our friends.

Ralph returned to the cabin to announce the sad intelligence. He was recalled. They had expected nothing less, but could not repress emotion at the announcement.

Once more Shuldham appeared. The ‘Boadicea’ had annulled all former directions, signalling that the stranger, a British frigate bound up channel, would take charge of the prize, and of the ‘Trelawney.’

Here was a respite at least, and the ladies

reappeared. All was once more calm, and they felt the value of the passing moment. A rapid succession of important events had been brought to a happy conclusion, though they were still aware that only a few uncertain minutes remained to them, before Ralph would be summoned to return to his duty.

Ralph at length held a long and undisturbed conversation with Julia, and they spoke fully of Mrs. Rutherford.

“My excellent mother, my dearest Julia,” said Ralph, “will see in that ring,” and he took her hand, “that she beholds the object of her son’s devoted affection, and she will greet you, dearest, with true maternal love. You, my Julia, will be a daughter to her for my sake, and soon, my love—very soon—for her own. You are kindred spirits. Simple and generous hearts will recognise each other at a glance. Had I but derived half the advantages I ought to have derived

from her precept and example, I had been more worthy of you.”

Julia spoke little, but that intelligent countenance, and the honest simplicity of her unaffected happiness, were more than eloquent.

The meeting with Mrs. Rutherford, though looked forward to now with great pleasure, had its formidable point of view, and she had heard so much of Ralph's mother, and had formed so high an opinion of her, that she sometimes almost feared lest she herself might be deemed not worthy of the son.

Ralph felt that there was some little trepidation in Julia's heart about his mother, and, with the tact of true affection, he sought to remove it.

“My mother,” he said, “is the most gentle and generous of women, and will fully appreciate a character so like her own. I must write to her, my Julia. She will

receive Shuldham as if he were myself, and this arrangement will suit us all. Since I am denied the happiness of presenting you to her, it will be a great delight to him to do so, and he will be thus, as it were, still a member of your family. He is very dear to me, and I owe him much more than you are aware of, my love."

Julia was much gratified by this arrangement, in which Laura's feelings had been so much considered; but she was becoming painfully agitated, for every footstep that approached the door seemed to sound the knell of separation. Nor were her apprehensions groundless, for the faithful friend who would permit no one else to intrude, now informed Ralph that the Captain of the strange frigate had gone on board the 'Boadicea,' and that both ships were steering down for them.

Ralph gave his hand to his friend :

“Julia,” he said, “will tell you our plans, and I beseech you to conform to them. Your inclinations have not been forgotten.”

“You are recalled,” whispered Shuldham, as he retired.

“God help me, Julia,” he said; “the events of this day have made me the happiest of men in a manner so strange and unexpected, that I ought to be proof against affliction, and yet, now that I am summoned away, I feel that to leave you thus is more than I can well bear. Your father and uncle have laid me under eternal obligations, for I do not possess the requisites so essential in the eyes of parents; and you, my noble, generous Julia, have not even thought of this.”

“My recollections of you,” said Julia, faintly, but firmly, “are such as to make me proud of the man it is my delight to

love and honour. "Would to Heaven," she continued, "you could return to England with us, were it only to assure your mother in person, that you have deemed me worthy to be her daughter—worthy of this ring, which—"

A bustle on deck, and a distant gun were heard, and the cry of "Boadiceas away!" warned them that the moment of separation had arrived. Julia was unable to complete her sentence. Ralph pressed the sobbing girl to his heart.

"God's blessing be with you, my dearest love!" he whispered. "This separation breaks my heart. But before we meet again, I will win a name for my Julia to share."

He rushed upon deck to resume the stern path of duty. Waving his hand to the Carterets—for he felt that he could not meet

their farewell—he pressed Shuldham’s hand, and sprang into his boat.

“Poor youth !” said Uncle Peter ; “ he could not take leave of us, lest his feelings should overcome him. My heart misgives me, Andrew, lest there should be sorrow of deeper dye in store for our dear girl. ’Tis a fearful profession for a man, and would never have suited me, Andrew.”

CHAPTER II.

JULIA had taken refuge in her private cabin. Laura and Jemima did their best to console her ; but the events of the morning, for it was yet early, had agitated her dreadfully. He was gone, gone too, to expose himself to every danger ; she recalled his every look, his every word, even those which she had scarcely heard at the time, returned to her recollection now, with all the vividness of reality ; she started up.

“Laura,” she faltered, “did I not hear

him say that before we met again, he would win himself a name. Alas! Alas! those fatal words, with all their frightful import, I now but too well comprehend; he will attempt some desperate deed! Oh! I am very wretched!"

Laura soothed and calmed her. She had not heard it. Julia's imagination, she said, had misled her, and the frigate was merely on a cruize, from which she would soon return. Had she indeed been destined for some distant shore, and her return uncertain, then there would have been real cause for sorrow.

"Thank God, it is not so, Laura!" said Julia. "I will be more resigned, since you convince me of this; but it is hard to lose him so soon."

"Rather," replied her sister, "let us be thankful that we were permitted to see him at all. Much that would have been painfully

uncertain, is now secured. My father's approbation for instance, and you too will meet Mrs. Rutherford, as the betrothed of her son, in full affectionate confidence. How awkward would that meeting have been, had you not seen him first."

Julia looked at her sister with astonishment. She had never heard so long a speech from her before, never seen her so clear and decided.

"You are right Laura," she returned at length. "I must not give way. Leave me for an hour. I who have so much to thank God for, must not repine. I must pray for composure, for strength of mind."

Laura re-entered the cabin, where her father and Uncle Peter were conversing upon the events of the day.

"How is poor Julia?" said Mr. Carteret, "I hope—" but he was interrupted by having

a letter put into his hands by Shuldham. He broke it open, and read as follows :

“ Captain Garham of H. M. S. ‘Mermaid,’ presents his compliments to Mr. Carteret, and acquaints him that their mutual friend Mr. Rutherford, has requested him to give Mr. Carteret every facility for embarking his family on board a pilot-boat for the Needles. Captain Garham will be most happy to do so, or to render Mr. Carteret any other service.”

“ Rutherford is still thinking for us and acting for us,” said Mr. Carteret musingly ; “ but I must answer this very civil note, Shuldham.”

“ The boat is gone, Sir,” answered Shuldham. “ It merely put a young midshipman on board with this note, and one for me, enclosing one to Miss Carteret, and immediately left us. Captain Thompson is be-

ginning to make sail after the 'Mermaid.'” He gave a note to Laura, and retired.

The weather was fine and the wind was light, yet it was hoped that they would see the Portland Lights during the night.

“ We are still under Rutherford’s care and protection,” said Laura, returning to her sister when the hour had expired ; and she related to Julia the contents of the note her father had received, whilst she delivered her own. “ And papa says,” she continued, “ that Mr. Rutherford’s suggestion is the very thing, for by going through the Needles passage, we shall reach Lymington to-morrow, which is only a few miles from Bcwdeley.”

Julia had quite recovered her composure, but desired Laura to excuse her to her father for the day, as she really had a headache. This settled, Laura, who had become wonderfully expert in love matters, left her

sister to the enjoyment of her first note from Ralph.

“And we are still under your care and protection, Ralph,” said the sweet girl, after having read the note five times over: “my father says so, and I feel that it is so. When shall I be really and wholly under such a safeguard?” and she relapsed into a delightful reverie.

The gentlemen were now on the poop, admiring and criticising the brigantine, so lately an object of terror, but now tame and docile, following the frigate, and displaying to advantage her beautiful proportions, whilst the reduced sails under which she kept her way with the ‘Trelawney,’ which was under all sail, bore witness to her dangerous swiftness.

“She looks, to me,” said Dr. Seacombe, “like a wild beast whose teeth have been

drawn and his claws cut ; and I cannot but recollect what a different feeling she created whilst she possessed them.”

Laura now came to deliver Julia's message to her father.

“ Well, Laura,” said Uncle Peter, who had become vivacious since Ralph's sudden appearance had charmed away his gout, and he had found himself under such safe escort, so near the end of his eventful voyage, “ is not Julia coming up ?”

“ Julia has a severe headache, and I come to make her excuses, uncle.”

“ Is it a headache or a heartache, my love? But you are a prudent, quiet girl, Laura, and I am sure after all you have seen to-day, you will never listen to a sailor-lover. Their wooing, Laura, is too rough, too hurried ; calls here, guns there ! They drop from the clouds when you least expect them, and off

they are again before you can look round you. 'Tis all confusion, and would not suit you by any means. No, no, Laura, no sailor-lover for you."

This was an awkward speech to Laura, who dared not look up because she felt that Shuldham was at her elbow. He always was, but he moved off, not much relishing the joke, and Laura made a hasty retreat to the cabin.

Portland Lights were passed during the night, and next morning, after breakfast, off St. Alban's Head, they fell in with an Isle of Wight pilot-boat on the look-out for passengers. The frigate hove-to, and enabled them to remove from the 'Trelawney' into the pilot-cutter at their leisure. Garhan, with all his trickery, was a kind-hearted man, and shrewd enough to perceive that his old friend Rutherford was deeply interested in this

matter; and Julia felt with rapture that Ralph's superintendence still watched over her.

“His hand is in this,” she whispered to Laura. “He has not forgotten us, and may God be with him. But I must not, dare not think of all that may await him.”

They bade adieu to Captain Thompson, and made sail for the Needles.

Shuldham was in great request as they approached the land. It was a strange feeling that the elders of the party experienced when they recognised that beautiful island after an absence of so many years, as slowly approaching those steep and chalky cliffs, they began to make out the strange pinnacles of rock which gave name to the narrow, and for large ships somewhat dangerous, passage which separates the Isle of Wight from the neighbouring coast of Hampshire, so thickly studded with villas,

but the immediate shore of which is not remarkable for beauty, being too much under tidal influences.

They began to compare what they recollected with what they saw, and to question the master of the cutter, a man about their own age, as to new buildings and other alterations.

To Shuldham all was familiar, and he was delighted to explain to Julia and Laura what they saw, and so identified was Shuldham now with his absent friend, that even Julia listened to him with interest.

As the flood-tide made, they began to move up more rapidly, and as with a light breeze they swept close past the shingly reef, yet partly dry, where the passage is very narrow, the girls shuddered lest they should be arrested in their course; but this was a momentary alarm, for soon they opened the island coast more extensively.

“This, then,” said Julia, “is the far-famed Isle of Wight, of which we have heard so much, that I have a dreamy fancy of an imaginary Isle of Wight. But I see nothing of Lymington, though I suppose we are not very far from it.”

“Lymington,” replied Shuldham, “is not very conspicuously placed. Do you see on the Hampshire side a large wicker basket stuck on the top of a high pole?”

“I do, and a strange-looking thing it is; but what can that have to do with Lymington?”

“That cage, well known by the romantic name of *Jack in the Basket*, marks the entrance to Lymington Creek, and we are now hauling up for it. Do not be surprised at the unattractive shores of the creek. It is the penalty which our beautiful Hampshire pays, for the various inlets of the sea which, when filled with water at high tide, so richly

adorn her, but the retreat of the tide leaves long and dreary banks of unsightly mud in particular situations. The difference of the landscape at high and low water, is almost inconceivable."

And as they turned slowly up the creek with the tide, they felt it dismal enough, for there was but a narrow winding channel amidst extensive mud banks.

It was getting late in the afternoon before they approached Lymington, for it was yet early in the year, and Mr. Carteret determined to go no further that night.

"I," said Dr. Seacombe, "will take a shore-boat and row up. I know the place well. There is a very tolerable inn, and I will secure beds and order dinner, or we shall run a risk of short fare; and we have had nothing to eat since breakfast. I will be at the wharf to meet you."

It was so agreed, and the Doctor called a

shore-boat, and was soon out of sight round the point.

Arrived at the wharf, they found Seacombe waiting. All was ready for them, he said, at the inn; and they congratulated themselves upon being at length safely on shore in Old England.

A messenger was sent with hasty notes to Lady Evandale, and to Mrs. Rutherford, saying, truly, that the ladies were too much fatigued to proceed, but that they would do so early next morning.

Julia and Laura having taken some slight refreshment, retired to the luxury of a bed that did not rock like a cradle, and a floor that was quite still, though at first they trod it with some misgivings. Such is the effect of long habit.

Not so the rest of the party; the Doctor, like many of his profession, was a *bon vivant*, so was Uncle Peter, in a small

way, and Seacombe knew how to cater for him. Fish and English roast beef were the order of the day, and with the aid of wild fowl, they did very well. They were in England: the dreaded Atlantic with its storms and its privateers had been passed, to be ventured upon no more. There was in this thought a world of happiness, which was almost oppressive. They drank Rutherford's health with enthusiasm.

“I shall set out for town early in the morning,” said the Doctor. “You, Shuldham, must remain, as it was Rutherford's particular wish, and you are expected at Bewdley Cottage.”

The Doctor promised to return to them when they were settled, and they parted.

On the following morning, before they were ready to set out, Lady Evandale's carriage arrived.

“My dearest cousins,” wrote Edith, “mamma

sends the carriage for you, and I would fain have gone in it, but mamma says it will bring all the party, if it is sent empty, so I consent to await your arrival. How I do long to see you, and to hear all your adventures. Dear Mrs. Rutherford has sent her pony phaeton for Mr. Shuldham. Do, dearest, come at once, or I shall repent not having gone to you.

“EDITH.”

Mr. Carteret received a note from Lady Evandale, congratulating him upon their safe arrival, and Shuldham a warm invitation from Mrs. Rutherford.

“As you have seen my son so lately, I am sure,” she said, “you will do me the favour to come. Ralph speaks of you as of a brother, and in that light I am prepared to consider you.”

About eleven o'clock they set off, and Laura

looked from the window for the pony-chaise, but it was far, far behind ; and Uncle Peter asked her if she had left anything she wished to turn back for. Poor Laura blushed, but did not answer,

“It is rather formidable, this visit,” said Julia ; “for, well as we know Edith as a correspondent, Lady Evandale is comparatively a stranger.”

But it was not the meeting with Lady Evandale, or Edith, which was really formidable to Julia ; it was the idolized mother of Ralph, upon whom so much depended. Should she please her ? Should she be deemed a worthy possessor of her son’s love ?

But Julia was naturally sanguine, and she took courage at the thought that she should first meet her cousin Edith, who would be able to tell her much that she wished to know of Mrs. Rutherford.

Amidst these thoughts they entered the Lodge gate. Julia saw not the beauty of the grounds, passionately as she estimated such scenes ; she saw nothing but Cousin Edith, a tall and graceful girl, waiting impatiently to receive them. The greeting was cordial. Lady Evandale was an elegant, unaffected person, and did the honours of her house to her husband's family with winning courtesy. She was much struck with Julia, whose carriage and manners were full of such natural grace as gave lustre to her beauty. Julia was perhaps a little flurried, but this heightened the colour in a cheek somewhat paled by the fatigue and alarm she had undergone.

Laura and Edith were of the same age, and circumstances had given to Julia a more womanly appearance than the mere difference of years would have warranted. It was evident that Laura sought and found a con-

genial friend in her cousin. Julia was not at leisure for girlish friendships, but she entered into conversation with her aunt, and awaited the arrival of Mrs. Rutherford with something approaching to awe, though she did not look as if she stood much in awe of any one.

The gentlemen having proceeded to look after the baggage which had just arrived, and Edith having led away Cousin Laura to see her pets, her own flower-garden, and other interesting sights, Lady Evandale asked Julia some questions about their voyage, and the alarm they had experienced so near home, and then led the conversation easily and naturally to Ralph's mother.

“ I hope every moment, my dear Julia, to see my friend Mrs. Rutherford. She is most desirous to see you, my love, but must wait at home to receive her son's friend, Mr. Shuldham. You will find her, Julia, what I

have ever found her, all that is good and amiable, and she will look on you, my dear girl, with her son's eyes, as she longs to assure you herself. I would fain remove all that may appear embarrassing to you in this interview, but one moment of her presence will do that most effectually."

Julia seized Lady Evandale's hand and pressed it to her lips. Her tears flowed fast; there was a kindness, a consideration in her aunt's speech which was inexpressibly welcome to her, and when Mrs. Rutherford was announced soon afterwards, Julia threw herself into the arms which were opened to receive her.

"Welcome, my child, my daughter," said the fond mother, "I have long seen that my son's happiness depended upon you, and now that I see you, I feel that I am more than satisfied. God bless you both."

Lady Evandale left them together, and

rarely were two persons more delighted with each other. Mrs. Rutherford and Shuldham dined at the Lodge. It was a happy day, and Julia retired to rest with a heart grateful for the blessings she enjoyed.

Lady Evandale possessed in perfection the art of making her guests feel at home; the hours of meals were fixed, rides and walks were suggested, and every one was permitted to follow, without let or hindrance, the dictates of their own inclinations.

If Julia and Mrs. Rutherford preferred to walk or to drive out together in the pony-chaise, which last was often the case, for the history of the pony-chaise had been told, and listened to with deep interest, that was their own affairs; and if Julia chose to recount to her dear friend stories of Ralph's gallantry, and how he had rescued them from horrid savages, or how he had since saved them from being carried to France, the delighted

mother listened as if she had never heard a word on the subject before. Yet had Shuldham told her the whole story circumstantially, but when was a fond mother tired of hearing the praises of her son? So interesting did these topics prove, that especially after Mr. Carteret and Uncle Peter had been summoned to London on business, Julia was almost Mrs. Rutherford's guest, whilst Shuldham, as the pony-chaise contained but two, was compelled to pass his time chiefly at the Lodge. But Shuldham was a good-humoured fellow, and did not complain. Edith and Laura found him wonderfully useful in fifty ways, and they took long walks, a point upon which Edith had hitherto been under some restraint, as Lady Evandale was no great pedestrian. Indeed, she seldom walked beyond her own grounds, unless it was to the cottage, or with her friend, Mrs. Rutherford, to visit her poor neighbours. But Edith disliked

being cooped up in a carriage, when there were so many beautiful rides and walks. And the cliffs, too, where she had never been permitted to venture, she was now, with Laura and Shuldham, free to range, and she enjoyed her liberty exceedingly.

Trevor House, about a mile off, had been greatly approved of, and was taken by Mr. Carteret. It had recently been inhabited by the Trevors, a very agreeable family, with whom the Evandales had lived on very friendly terms, but they had gone abroad for three years, leaving it completely furnished. This suited Mr. Carteret admirably, and the ladies occupied themselves with forming the female part of the establishment, who were chiefly old servants of the Trevors. This saved a world of drilling, and so diligent had Julia been, with Mrs. Rutherford's assistance, that within a fortnight, Mr. Carteret received the following letter :—

“ My dear Papa.

“ We have laboured incessantly to get Trevor House ready for you, that we might, as you desired, relieve dear Aunt Evandale from such an invasion, as that which she so kindly proposed, and has so hospitably endured. We are most happy here, and aunt most kind, but you must have a home of your own, and now that you have one, I hope you will return to us, that we may take possession of it. As for Uncle Peter, how he has lived so long without us, I don't know, but we miss him exceedingly, and if he does not return forthwith, I shall be jealous. Dear Mrs. Rutherford is so good to us, and has taken such pains to instruct me in the art of English housekeeping, that I shall astonish you. Write to-morrow and say you will be here the next day. I never was so long absent from you before, neither Laura nor I know what to make of it.

“ Aunt Evandale and Edith send their best love.

“ Your affectionate daughter.

“ JULIA.”

“ P.S. Poor old Jemima wants to know, what for massa stay so long away ; the poor old soul has become a great favourite here.”

Shuldham now received intelligence that he was appointed to a ship at Plymouth. There was no remedy ; he felt he could not offer to Laura, but he felt full confidence in the affection of the fair and gentle girl. Shuldham had made himself dear to them all, and Julia considered him as part and parcel of Ralph, about whom she would talk to Shuldham as to a brother. He was familiar too with their Jamaica recollections, which rendered him particularly acceptable to Uncle Peter, who loved Jamaica still. Mrs.

Rutherford had found his conversation delightful, for it ever turned upon Ralph, and Edith too was wholly indebted to him for those rambles she so delighted in, while Lady Evandale had no precautions to take against a youth enthusiastically attached to another, who, on the other hand, had no idea of concealing the pleasure she felt in his society. Thus Shuldham had quietly grown up into great consideration with young and old, for Mr. Carteret saw his valuable qualities, and felt that at some future time his daughter might be happy with such a husband.

Shuldham took an unwilling leave, and the long walks ceased, most provokingly, just as the advancing spring was making them more delightful than ever: so that Edith as well as Laura mourned his departure.

“Suppose mamma,” said Edith, “we drive over to Trevor House to-morrow. Julia says that she expects my uncle will be there the

following day, and we should surely see all ready for them. Mrs. Carter is an excellent woman, but we should like to go."

"I cannot go with you to-morrow Edith, but if you can persuade Mrs. Rutherford to accompany you, you shall have the carriage."

The girls, who now that Shuldham was gone, wanted something to do sadly, set off for the cottage. They found Julia and Mrs. Rutherford practising at the piano, for Julia had discovered that the good lady had a store of old world songs and airs, which she felt intuitively persuaded must be Ralph's favourites, and she lost no opportunity of acquiring them. The proposal was made and accepted.

The following morning brought a letter for Lady Evandale from Mr. Carteret, who informed her with many thanks for her kindness and hospitality, that he should arrive at

Trevor House the following day, with Uncle Peter, and his old friend Doctor Seacombe. Julia received information to the same effect, and it was agreed that they should inspect their preparations, and give orders for the morrow, and that on the following morning they should remove to Trevor House, to receive their father and uncle, after the longest absence from them they had ever known.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Ralph arrived on board the 'Boadicea,' Birchall told him to make his report to Captain Merivale in his cabin, where Captain Garham, of the 'Mermaid,' was with him.

"Garham!" said Ralph. "Is he here? Well, I ought to have known the 'Mermaid,' though she was painted black when I saw her last; but I thought she was safe enough off the Texel, and did not dream of finding her here in the Channel."

He found his friend Garham with Captain Merivale, and was exceedingly well pleased thereat ; for he could recommend his friends to Garham's attention, with confidence. No man was kinder or more considerate, when practical jokes were out of the question.

“ Well, Rutherford,” said Captain Merivale, “ in what state is the recaptured ship? The privateer's men had not time, I trust, to do much mischief ?”

“ It is the ‘ Trelawney,’ from Jamaica, Sir. She is in excellent order. Some old friends of mine are passengers on board her, and an invalided Lieutenant, an old messmate in the flag ship. Captain Garham will only need to send a youngster to take nominal charge of her. She will give him no trouble.”

“ I am going up to give some directions,” said the Captain. “ You can, in the meantime, explain matters to Captain Garham, and

remain here till I return. I shall not be long."

"Well, Rutherford," said the latter gentleman; "your Captain's grave, business-like face puts me out; I am scarcely acquainted with him, and I must be more careful how I play with edged tools. You left me in a pretty scrape. Fine girls those Maresfields, ha! I thought I was in for balls and dinners without end; but old Sir Timothy was too sharp for me. Confound that barber, with his impertinent, inquisitive face! I could not resist the temptation. How could I suppose the fool would bring the whole town down upon us in a moment? I never was so astonished in my life. A jolly sort of a place, that Yarmouth, is it not?"

Ralph admitted the fact.

"And then that short-sighted old Admiral

—who, I thought, saw nothing—to keep his countenance as he did. Never trust those old fellows that can't see. I was regularly taken a-back. Instead of balls and dinners, a cruize off the Texel in February. It chills me when I think of it. However, the old man had some conscience, for he only kept me there five weeks, and he was wonderfully civil, when I went back. Not a word about old stories, and I was on my good behaviour, so we get on capitally, the jolly old frieze cloak, cocked hat, and all.”

The voluble Captain might have gone on for hours; Ralph would not have interrupted him, as his thoughts were elsewhere, and he made an excellent listener—that is to say, if no questions were to be asked, and no remarks expected.

Captain Merivale's return interrupted his visitor. He took some papers from his desk, and returned to the deck.

Ralph seized the opportunity, and before his companion could speak, said :

“ My dear Sir, there is a family on board the ‘ Trelawney,’ the Carterets, from whom I received great kindness in Jamaica, their wish is to get a pilot-boat on this side of the Isle of Wight, that they may go through the Needles. Will you do me the favour to facilitate their object? They have been terribly frightened, as you may imagine, having been captured by that privateer.”

“ I will most assuredly,” said his old acquaintance, and before he could say more, Merivale returned,

“ Captain Garham,” he said, “ I have directed the ‘ Swift’ by telegraph signal, to send the French boat, and the men they left on board the ‘ Trelawney’ to you, and to give up that ship to your officer. Captain Bromhead is also directed to resign the brigantine to you. I will write an order for you to take

them to Portsmouth. Have you received all the information you require from Mr Rutherford?" Garham bowed. "Then you may go, Rutherford, but send Mr. Birchall here."

Mr. Birchall entered the cabin.

"Has the 'Goelan' brought to with the prize yet?"

"She is now in the act of rounding to, close to the 'Mermaid,' Sir, with the brigantine following her."

"Very good, let me know when she makes the signal that she is ready to proceed, and make 'Swift's' signal to look out to windward. Be ready to make sail as soon as Captain Garham's boat leaves us."

Ralph, meanwhile, having set Tit Tandy to look out, and to give him timely notice of Captain Garham's movements, wrote a short and not very intelligible note to his fair Julia, which she afterwards declared was wonderfully clever, and having carefully sealed it, he

proceeded to tell Shuldham, in another note, that his old friend, Captain Garham, had most kindly undertaken to facilitate their embarking in a pilot-boat, and that he would merely send a youngster on board for form sake. He had hardly concluded, when Tit announced that the Captain was on the move, and enclosing Julia's note in Shuldham's, he hastened up to ask Garham to take charge of it. The facetious Captain observing that Ralph was somewhat flurried, looked at the direction of the letter.

"Lieutenant Shuldham, R.N.," he said. "There is more in this, Rutherford, I suspect, than meets the eye. What did you say was the name of the family from Jamaica? ay, Carteret, that's it. Well, I'll go on board and assure them that, as an old friend of yours, I shall be happy to pay every attention in my power."

Ralph felt a little discomposed, for he

knew his man, but a moment's reflection satisfied him that if he did really go on board the 'Trelawney,' Julia would not appear.

Whether Captain Merivale thought that his guest was wasting time, or it was mere accident, he wished him good day so politely, that Garham took his leave and entered his boat.

The 'Boadicea' made sail, and Ralph soon saw the 'Trelawney' fast sinking below the horizon, but he had the satisfaction to feel that she was under ample protection, and that Julia would perhaps on the morrow be safe with his mother.

He took charge of the watch, and looked from time to time at the now distant 'Trelawney.' She had bore up, after the frigate, in company with the brigantine, now no longer dangerous to her, and soon she became a mere speck on the ocean.

"Well, Rutherford," said Captain Meri-

vale, "so this was really the ship you expected; and you found your friends all well, I hope, notwithstanding their troubles? Were there ladies in the family?"

Ralph communicated as much of the Carterets and his connection with them as he could, without making Julia too prominent a figure in the picture; but Merivale soon saw how matters stood, and having congratulated Ralph on the rescue, and on having placed them in safety, changed the subject.

"I have heard much of Captain Garham, but I scarcely know him," he observed. "You seemed to be well acquainted with him. He is rather given to boyish tricks, is he not?"

"He is, Sir; but he is an amiable and friendly man, from whom I have received much kindness."

"I cannot realize to myself," said Meri-

vale, gravely, "a Captain of a man-of-war condescending to play monkey tricks; but what signal is that on board the brig?"

"A strange sail, south-west, Sir," replied Tit.

"Make the brig's signal to chase, Rutherford; but, on no account to part company," and having thus spoken, the Captain descended to the cabin.

Ralph was summoned to dinner, and was relieved by the officer of the forenoon watch, who dined with the Captain an hour and a half later. Ralph had never felt less disposed to dine; but he feared that he should subject himself to idle remarks if he did not attend, for Birchall had begun to recover from his lovelorn fit, somewhat perhaps instigated to a resumption of his former habits by the presence of the Russian officer, who, although he spoke English pretty well, was as ignorant of the world as a child; and Birchall

used to relate such extraordinary events, that Shopronoff's large round eyes would become fixed upon him with amazement, nothing doubting the truth of his wonderful stories. Ralph had been accustomed privately to explain to the Russian that this was mere joking; but still Birchall's wondrous tales possessed a fascination which Shopronoff could not resist, and his admiration delighted their narrator immensely.

It appeared that the Russian, seeing Birchall carry on the duty of the ship so gravely and efficiently, could not comprehend that he was a very different person at the mess-table. Shopronoff was a singular character: he would sit down and watch the process of stropping a block, or even of pointing a rope, with untiring patience; but he never paid any attention to the working, or to the manœuvring of the ship, nor did he take any interest in the division and the

stationing of the crew, or of the magazine arrangements. He never turned out at night, happen what would ; and passed many hours daily in playing his violin, on which he was tolerably efficient, playing chiefly national airs, and very beautiful they were. Poor Shopronoff had lost his heart to a lodging-house keeper's daughter in London, where he had spent a few days on his way to Portsmouth. He was thoroughly good-humoured, and as trustful as a child, and when anything vexed him, he had recourse to his violin, and often he would sigh most sentimentally, humming, with tears in his eyes :

“ Sweet Rosemary, she vas live at number first.”

Ralph, partly from a natural disposition to serve a foreigner thus suddenly thrown amongst strangers, and in some degree perhaps actuated by a wish to study the disposition of a man whose features, though not

unpleasing, were strangely indicative of Tartar race, had from the first treated him with marked attention. Shopronoff's English having been gained from books and teaching, without sufficient conversational intercourse with natives, though generally grammatical, failed him at times, but most especially when he was puzzled by any unusual combination of words or slang. In this last line, Birchall indulged largely, being particularly amused with the Russian's attempts to unravel the mystery ; for, good-natured as Shopronoff really was, he was still very tenacious of anything intentionally disrespectful to himself or to his country, particularly from Birchall, whose remarks frequently produced a general laugh, which Shopronoff, being unable to trace to any other object, was rather too prompt to take to himself, and was often much distressed to know whether he ought to be angry or not. Upon all such occasions,

and they were many, Ralph had accustomed Shapronoff to come to him for explanations, and thus had often prevented umbrage being taken where no offence had been intended; Ralph had on this night the first watch which was from eight o'clock till midnight. The first hour was occupied as usual with mustering the watch, placing the look-out men, &c.; and soon afterwards the Captain, according to his usual practice, came up to look at the night, and to see that the ships were in their stations before he gave his orders for the night, and retired. He very rarely remained on deck long, and poor Ralph looked forward to being at length left to his own reflections; but he reckoned without his host, the Captain was for once in a talkative mood.

“It is certainly very odd,” he said, “that whilst beating down channel in a fog this morning, we should have heard minute guns,

and have come so opportunely to the relief of your friends. Had we kept the easterly wind of the day before, we should have missed them, and yet we were disappointed at the change. Whatever is, is best, should be a sailor's motto."

The Captain seemed to chew the cud upon this reflection, and walked up and down, occasionally muttering some remark in unison with it, for Rutherford remained silent till the midshipman of the watch reported:

"Four knots and a half, Sir, and the ships are on their stations."

"That cannot be six bells," observed the Captain.

"Yes, Sir," said Ralph, who thought it the longest two hours he had ever endured, though he had always hitherto considered the Captain walking till so late an hour with him a high compliment, and so it was, and his conversation which, on preceding occa-

sions had generally turned upon points of service and the past experiences of Merivale, had ever been both amusing and instructive.

“Don’t I see the Russian there on deck?” said the Captain. “Does he often walk the deck so late?”

“Very rarely,” said Ralph, who had not observed him, but now felt that his presence at so unusual an hour held out little hope of his being left to his own thoughts. The Captain gave Rutherford his night orders, and left the deck.

No sooner was Ralph alone than up rushed Shopronoff in a painful state of agitation which damaged his English not a little, for he had been nursing his wrath and impatience for two long hours, hoping every instant that the Captain would retire from the deck.

“Rutherford,” said the Russian, spluttering

from wrath and agitation, "de comical cub, vat is it, vat ish dat comical cub, I say?"

"What," said Ralph, "what is it that you can possibly mean, my good fellow?"

"De comical cub, vat is he, I say; I look for him in my dictionaire, cannot find him?"

Shopronoff was far too angry to speak plain. He almost foamed at the mouth; but Ralph calmed him down, and by dint of close questioning, discovered that Birchall, who had been joking as usual, upon Shopronoff's making some remark, had, in his ludicrous way, called him a comical cub. Unable to comprehend what it meant, Shopronoff had referred to his dictionary; the first word was not complimentary, the second meant a young bear, a very equivocal expression to a Russian; and the officers present having laughed aloud at the oddity of the phrase, poor Shopronoff doubting whether

he ought not to resent it, and deriving no consolation from his dictionary, had flown to the deck to consult his friend Ralph, who had told him to come to him in all his difficulties of the kind. There he had found Captain Merivale, and etiquette forbade him to approach the officer of the watch whilst Merivale was with him, and indeed the subject was not at all calculated to meet the Captain's ear.

Ralph assured his breathless friend that there was not the slightest intention of offence on Birchall's part, who was a humorist, and used strange expressions at which the hearers usually laughed; and then he thought he should at last be left alone. But Shapronoff was in such high spirits at finding that his fears of insult were quite imaginary, that he forthwith began to confide to Ralph all the difficulties he had met with in comprehending the events of the day.

Poor Ralph groaned at the unseasonable infliction, but he had repeatedly told Shopronoff to do so, and he now explained all these things to the satisfaction of his friend in the hope that he would go, but Shopronoff had determined to remain with him.

“It was so noice to walk here in de foin noight mit a friend,” quoth Shopronoff.

This was too much for Ralph’s patience.

“Did you hear seven bells strike?” he said. “I suppose you mean, my good fellow, to keep the middle watch with Lawrence.”

Shopronoff, thus reminded of the lapse of time, started from his dream of “Sweet Rosemary,” and disappeared in a moment, for he loved his cot dearly, and this was a very unusual hour for him to be out of it.

At length Ralph was alone, but it was too late. Shopronoff’s love harmonised so little with his own, that “Sweet Rosemary” was not worthy to breathe the same atmosphere,

and his whole train of thought was broken up.

“It’s looking rather black to windward there, Sir,” said the mate of the watch. Ralph had been for some time aware of the fact, and he now looked to windward intently for a moment.

“More rain than wind there,” he said; “but stretch along the jib, downhaul, man the spanker brails, and lay along the main clue garnets. Be careful that no man quits the deck till he is relieved.”

“Brail up, haul down,” exclaimed Ralph, “man the main buntlines well, up mainsail, hands by the topsail haulyards.”

But, as Rutherford had predicted, there was more rain than wind, and he soon got a thorough drenching. This last interruption to his thoughts was a rough matter-of-fact affair. People are seldom sentimental when cold, wet, and wearied, and obliged to exert

themselves. Midnight found Ralph under these circumstances, so he took the bright side of the question, made up his mind that Julia was safe under his mother's wing, and went to sleep like a sensible man ; for a sailor knows the value of sleep when he can catch it, as there is no guessing when he may get another nap.

Ralph was awakened at five o'clock next morning with the intelligence that Mr. Birchall had tumbled over a wash-deck bucket, in the dark (though they called it daylight), and was for the present disabled, by which accident the duty of first lieutenant had devolved upon him. He rubbed his eyes, but it was no dream, and in five minutes he was on the quarter-deck, which was undergoing at the moment a very unpleasant operation ; buckets of water being thrown in all directions with great force, and the deluge closely followed up by men with brooms and scrubbing

brushes. The result was highly satisfactory in point of cleanliness, though the operation itself was detestable, especially when accompanied as it sometimes was, by the harsh grating sound of the hand stone, making altogether a most diabolical discord.

“ Rather sharp upon you, Rutherford, after your drenching in the first watch, ” said the master, who, like the first lieutenant, makes his first appearance at daylight, both under the very inappropriate denomination of idlers.

“ Do you see the ‘ Goelan’ and ‘ Swift’ ?” asked Ralph. “ It is a rascally dark morning.”

Both ships were in their stations at daylight, when Merivale came upon deck, soon after.

“ ‘ Goelan’ to look out to windward,” said he.

The signal was made, and the corvette proceeded under all sail. The ‘ Swift’ was

sent to leeward, whilst the frigate under less sail enabled the 'Goelan' to take her station.

"We shall spread a good clew now, Rutherford," said the Captain. "I hope Mr. Birchall is not much hurt."

"A severe sprain and broken shin, Sir, I believe, which will lay him up for a few days."

"'Goelan' has a good start now," rejoined Merivale. "Shake out a reef and make sail. We will try her upon a wind, Mr. Rutherford. Captain Bromhead talks rather largely. Take her bearings and the altitude of her mast-head, and we will soon see if she is the flyer he describes her to be. I have not much faith in great talkers."

CHAPTER IV.

BIRCHALL was very impatient under inability to perform quarter-deck duties, but he availed himself of his forced leisure to investigate and correct the numerous watch, station, and quarter bills, and various other matters connected with the interior discipline of the ship, in all of which Captain Merivale required and enforced strict order and regularity. He employed Tit Tandy as a sort of aide-de-camp, for as Birchall's own locomotives had just now been rendered useless by

his accident, and Mr. Griffiths insisted upon his laying up his injured leg, under the penalty of a long confinement, which to a man of Birchall's unwearied mobility was a frightful prospect, his time hung wretchedly upon his hands. He found in his *protégé* and favourite the very person best qualified to do his biddings, and a very tolerable secretary too; for Tit wrote a good hand, and knew which side his bread was buttered too well not to exert himself to the utmost in the service of his patron, with whom he was daily asked to dine—the difference in those days between a dinner in the midshipman's berth and one in the gun-room, being lean mutton and half-starved poultry in the latter, against salt beef and salt pork in the former; for Captain Merivale allowed no pigs to be kept on board the 'Boadicea,' and this difference to a hungry boy was a very important one.

Birchall therefore, notwithstanding his being in a state of eclipse, really worked hard all day, for he was a steady and zealous officer, notwithstanding his eccentricities, and knew his work well, or he would not have held his place long. But in the evening, after tea, he was wont to lay aside altogether the first lieutenant, and to give himself up to the somewhat noisy tone of mirth and jollity he loved so well. Here too he found his *protégé* equally intelligent and obsequious.

He took it into his head one wet evening when all the officers off duty were collected round the table, to show off his skill upon cards, in which it was supposed he must have taken lessons from some professor, which was probably the case. It was quite in his way to do so.

His immediate object on this occasion was to mystify Shopronoff, who had never seen anything of the kind, and who was already

prepared to think Birchall a proficient in the black art. He performed several tricks, requiring great sleight of hand, to the amusement of all the party (anything is fun in the country), and to the especial astonishment of Shopronoff. He next began to introduce such tricks as required a confederate, having previously instructed Tit in his design, and joyously did the mischief-loving imp enter into his views.

Shopronoff was sitting with his mouth open, and his large round eyes protruding with a ludicrous expression of admiration and wonder, when Birchall, who had been shuffling and displaying a pack of cards with much flourish and small talk, suddenly presented the displayed pack before Shopronoff's face, and desired him to choose a card. Then, still holding the cards in his hand, he turned his back towards Shopronoff.

“Take care I don't see it!” he exclaimed.

“There, now you are sure you’ll know the card again?”

Shopronoff intimated his certainty of that.

“Show it,” said Birchall, “to your two next neighbours; now replace it in the pack where you please, and pray do not forget it.”

He then returned to his tricks for some time with wonderful success. At length he said :

“By the bye, Shopronoff, you chose a card from the pack; do you recollect what it was?”

“Certainly I do,” replied the Russian.

“Well,” said Birchall, throwing down the pack before him, “try if you can find it.”

Shopronoff examined the pack carefully, over and over again.

“It was not here; I cannot find him,” he said.

“No!” said Birchall, affecting surprise; “not there! where can it be? let me think a little. Where can the card be got to?”

Then covering his face with his hands, and muttering to himself very mysteriously, during which ceremony Shopronoff fixed his eyes upon him with something like alarm:

“I have it!” he said, suddenly starting; “I have it! The card is lying snug under your pillow, Shopronoff.”

“It was not possible,” stammered Shopronoff,” and rising in great haste, he left the gun-room. In a few moments he re-entered, pale as death, his hair, always straight and stiff, raised up on end. The card was in his hand. He threw it upon the table, and looked at Birchall with astonishment, almost amounting to terror.

“It was the debble,” he said; “how else was it be possible?”

“Did you really find the card under your pillow?” said Tit, with a most ludicrous affectation of wonder; “and was it really the card you had chosen?”

“It was de knave of clobs himself, Sir,” said Shopronoff.

“Wonderful!” said Tit.

Ralph, who had been on deck, now entered the gun-room, and Shopronoff flew to him to recount all the wonders he had seen.

“Pooh, pooh, my good fellow!” said Ralph; “it’s all a joke. That you found the card under your pillow I have no doubt, and it is quite as likely that this same Mr. Tit put it there. Come here, Mr. Tit, and tell the truth.”

But Mr. Tit was nowhere to be found, nor did he make his appearance again that

evening in the gun-room. A hearty laugh ensued, and as some of the officers were polite enough to appear to have been as much deceived as Shopronoff himself, he soon forgot the trick played upon him, and taking up his violin, lost, as usual, all thought of all his grievances under the sweet influence of his favourite national airs.

Birchall was soon able to resume his deck-duty, and Ralph resumed his watch. His feelings had now subsided into a rational channel, and he felt the full value of the chance which had so opportunely led him on board the 'Trelawney,' and once more all his serious thoughts centred on Bewdley. The cottage was more than ever dear to him; the walks and the drives, and the conversations held there, came so home to his heart, that he was almost present there again.

"The Captain requests the pleasure of your company to dinner to-day, Sir," said

the Captain's servant ; " and yours, Mr. McDonald," to the marine officer who was walking with Ralph.

" I am glad that we both dine there," said Ralph ; " and I see Stevens has gone to Shopronoff. We shall have a pleasant party to-day."

Ralph had communicated much of his love affair to McDonald, and many a delightful chat they had. It was absolutely necessary to have some one to whom he could speak freely, and McDonald was an excellent and trustworthy confidant.

Captain Merivale kept a neat and well-appointed table, though somewhat formal. He was partial to McDonald, who was an excellent officer. At half-past three o'clock, or seven bells, the drum and fife at the cabin-door struck up, " Oh the roast beef of Old England," and dinner was announced to those invited. The officer of the afternoon watch,

who had been relieved by Ralph at four bells, or two o'clock, to his dinner, now resumed his duty, and Ralph and McDonald entered the cabin, as did Shopronoff, Griffiths the surgeon, and Mr. Tandy, it being his first appearance at the Captain's table.

Mr. Griffiths was requested to take the foot of the table, whilst the seat of honour, on the right hand of the Captain, was awarded to the stranger, with Ralph opposite to him. Such dinners are proverbially dull; but Merivale, though cold, was courteous.

The brigantine, the 'Trelawney,' and the 'Mermaid,' formed the staple of the conversation, which was tolerably sustained. Some military question having arisen, Merivale referred it to McDonald, who gave, without hesitation, a clear and sensible opinion. Merivale had indeed quietly contrived to give each of his guests an opening for conversation, save and except Shopronoff

and Tit. The first he found it difficult to bring out; the last he seemed to be rather apprehensive of bringing out; but he took wine with him. Tit had been especially rigged out for the great occasion by his patron, Birchall, with a wide-frilled shirt, much too big for him, with a collar of overwhelming proportions, whilst his little legs were inserted in Hessian boots up to his knees, over tight white pantaloons. But he was quite at his ease, and with a little encouragement would have led the conversation; but Merivale gave him no opportunity.

“Shopronoff,” said Captain Merivale, “I hope you like the ‘Boadicea,’ and that everything has been done to make your situation here agreeable to you.”

“Very mush so indeed, Sir,” replied the Russian.

“Where had you served before you came

here?" asked the Captain, endeavouring to draw him out.

"To Crostadt, Sir, and two campaigns in de Baltic."

He again stopped, and Merivale, determined to make another attempt, asked him whereabouts in Russia his family lived.

"Near Moscow, Sir," replied Shapronoff, and stopped.

"How far from Moscow?" continued Merivale, expecting to hear that it was ten or twelve miles, according to our idea of living near London.

Shapronoff hesitated as if he had been required to answer a very difficult question, then, with an effort:

"Four or five hundred mile," he said.

Merivale had now probably given it up as a hopeless task, but the drum beat to quarters, and the party broke up.

On the following day, the 'Goelan' had

been sent in chase, and was overhauling a neutral vessel a long way to windward ; but this was so frequently the case that little importance was attached to it, and no expectation had been excited.

“The ‘Goelan’ has made the signal, Sir, that she has intelligence to communicate,” said Mr. Birchall, entering the cabin.

“Direct her to pass within hail,” replied the Captain.

This was a joyful event to the idlers, who, having little to do, look forward to a piece of news as a great luxury, and when it is communicated by hailing, they got their full share of it.

Captain Merivale came on deck, and after looking round him said, “Mr. Birchall, round the ship to, lay the maintop-sail to the mast ; and take one of the cutters, row round the ship, and look particularly at the maintop-

mast; it strikes me we want a pull of the stays."

"The 'Goelan' is getting near us, Sir," said the officer of the watch.

"Make a signal for her Captain," he replied.

The quidnuncs were sadly disappointed; the news, whatever it might be, would not be published: they must wait and pick it up as they could.

Captain Bromhead came on board, and was ushered into the cabin to Captain Merivale. After a time the master was sent for with the charts, and a long conference ensued greatly to the annoyance of the uninitiated.

At length Captain Bromhead came forth, and Captain Merivale accompanied him to the deck, where every word of their conversation was devoured by eager ears, but nothing could be inferred from it.

“Make the signal for ‘Swift’s’ recall,” said Merivale. “You think you can rely upon what these people told you, Captain Bromhead?” he resumed.

“As I boarded the vessel myself in a mate’s coat, and affected such total indifference to the subject, and so much interest in learning where the vessel herself was really bound and what she carried, I am certain they did not suspect my views,” replied Bromhead, and he entered his boat.

“Has the ‘Swift’ answered the recall?” said Merivale. “How far is she from us?”

“About four miles, Sir. She is now answering the signal and hauling her wind.”

Birchall, having returned in the cutter, reported all right. The topmast, he thought, stood well.

“Hoist the boat up, make sail, and pipe to dinner, and then come down to me,” said the Captain, as he returned to his cabin.

“Mr. Birchall,” said the Captain, when that officer had returned to him, “the ‘Goelan’ has brought information, that four armed vessels, bound for Brest with naval stores, are creeping along shore to avoid our cruisers. I have made my calculations, and if, as I hope, I can fetch Cape Sangfroid by day-break to-morrow, we shall have a good chance of cutting them off; and should they take shelter where we cannot approach them with the ships, the boats must do it. It’s a very barren coast, little frequented, and there are no forts. Our chance of success chiefly depends upon the wind standing, as they will have to beat up along shore. Get your boats and small arm men ready, and tell Mr. McDonald to select twenty of his men for the service. He is an excellent young fellow, that.”

“Which of the officers shall I take, Sir?”

“ Rutherford and McDonald, certainly : who else you please ; but I am sorry to say Captain Bromhead must command the whole.”

Great was the joy expressed when Birchall communicated the intelligence. The boat’s crews and small arm men set about their preparations : all was quiet bustle, and exultation. The whole thing was discussed at the gun-room table, and thence throughout the ship. They were likely to have to contend with armed vessels, defended by boarding nettings. Happy was the man who belonged to a boat ; and two or three out of the boat’s crews being on the sick-list, Birchall was besieged by applicants for their places.

The wind gave them a chance of fetching Cape Sangfroid, and eagerly was it watched. Towards evening the signal was made to close with the Commodore, and to observe

his manœuvres, as no signals would be made during the night.

The object of this was to prevent the enemy from being aware of the approach of the squadron, for their telegraphs communicated night and day with the interior, and the military head-quarters ; it being Merivale's object to be close up with the Cape at daybreak, and to carry off the enemy's vessels before any great military force could be marched down from the interior. Cape Sangfroid being a low, projecting point, at the northern end of a deep bay, of great extent, in which the water was too shoal to permit even ships of moderate draught to approach near enough to the shore to molest small craft, was only accessible to them by their boats.

The night proved squally, and Captain Merivale had been on deck nearly all the

middle watch. Towards four o'clock, however, it settled, and there was promise of a fine morning. About half-past five the day appeared to break, and the Captain was called, in obedience to his orders. He rose; but as he groped his way up the quarter-deck ladder, and found it very dark, he was put out of humour, for he had not had two hour's sleep after an anxious night.

"Rather an early day-light you have made," he said somewhat gruffly. He had not addressed this to any one in particular, but Birchall felt that an indirect censure had fallen upon the officer of the watch, implying that he had disturbed the Captain unnecessarily by prematurely reporting day-light.

"It is one of those perplexing mornings, Sir," said Birchall, "in which, after a decided appearance of day-light, it becomes darker

than ever. The officer of the watch consulted me, for it was early; but he could not do otherwise than report day-light."

"I have often seen this false day-light, Mr. Birchall," said the Captain, "though I am not philosopher enough to account for it. Do you see 'Goelan' and 'Swift;' for as we show no lights so close upon the enemy's coast, there may be some doubts of their whereabouts, and I am particularly anxious to have both well up this morning?"

And he looked anxiously astern and to windward, but could see nothing, for it was very dark.

"We saw them both well up, Sir, in that blink of day-light," replied the officer of the watch.

"I am glad of that: for if we find ourselves, as I expect, well in with the Cape, and succeed in cutting off any of

their armed craft, coming from the southward, everything will depend upon promptitude." Then turning to the master he added: "How far are you now by your reckoning, Mr. Blgrave, from the Cape?"

"About six miles, Sir; we may stand into ten fathoms water here, in the darkest night."

"What water have you now?"

"Thirty fathoms, just as you came up, Sir, shoaling gradually from fifty fathoms at four o'clock."

"Keep the hand lead going, for we must be drawing fast in with the land. Pilot, you are sure there is no shoal water here?"

"No shoal, Capitaine Sare, soundings all reglar."

"You are ready, Mr. Birchall, with the boats?"

“ All ready, Sir.”

“ I confess I was pleased when I inspected the boats yesterday. It is well that we should have occasion for them now and then, though I must own I am not fond of sending them away, but this is a case of enemy's stores, and I have no option. But we won't land, Mr. Birchall. See, the day is beginning to break, and there is the looming of the land.”

Mr. Blagrove, the master, reported Cape Sangfroid, open on the weather bow about four miles distant.

“ The ‘ Goelan ’ and ‘ Swift ’ are in their stations, about half a mile off,” reported Birchall.

“ A very good landfall, Mr. Blagrove,” said the Captain in high good humour: “ keep a good look out aloft.”

“ Several strange sail inside the Cape,” was the report from the mast-head.

“Make the signal to close up, and to prepare boats for action,” said the Captain.

“Bear a hand, men, and stow the hammocks,” cried Birchall, adding, “Mast-head there! what do you make of those vessels now, Mr. Lanyard? Luff, Handy, luff: screw her up as the puffs come off the land.”

“Two small vessels are opening round the Cape: we shall make out the others directly,” was the reply from the mast-head.

“I saw you pull the quarter master’s pig-tail, Mr. Tit,” said Birchall, “Go to the mast-head directly, Sir. Up with you. If the Captain had seen you, he’d have sent you out of the ship.”

Ralph had slung his telescope at his back, and, mounting the rigging, was overtaking Tit, who was not moving with his usual alacrity, but somewhat sulkily, till feeling that some one shook the rigging

below him, he looked down, and seeing Ralph, of whom he stood in some awe, he sprang up the rigging like a monkey, as he heard him call out :

“Hallo, Mr. Chap, what no farther yet?”

And Ralph having fixed his telescope, and leisurely examined the strangers, hailed the deck.

“There are four of them, all luggers. Three are armed vessels: I shall make out the fourth immediately. Two are much larger than the others, but they are all armed; I see the fourth open now.”

“What are they about?” asked the Captain, “for I see the telegraph at work, warning them, I suppose, of our approach.”

“They were running alongshore for the Cape,” replied Ralph, “but have hauled in for the shore.”

“Do you see any fort or batteries for their protection?”

“Nothing of the sort, Sir: it is a bare, open country for miles, and utterly desolate, with ranges of low sand hills, which get higher and higher inland. The telegraph is on a hill, half a mile up from the shore.”

“Pilot,” said the Captain, “you say this bay is shallow; cannot the brig stand in to cover the boats? She only draws sixteen feet of water.”

“No Sare, dere is four fadom two miles off de shore; den not more as two fadoms all de way close to de shore.”

“Make a signal to prepare to anchor, and the signal for all captains with boats manned and armed.”

“Upon deck there,” hailed Ralph; “they have all four anchored close to the beach, and to each other, the two largest outside.”

The ‘Boadicea’ now opened the point, and Merivale could see the four vessels distinctly from the deck.

“What do you think of these vessels, Mr. Rutherford,” he said, (for Ralph had now descended from aloft) “if we cannot carry the ships in? Do they seem to be heavily armed?”

“They are large vessels, Sir, and full of men, and are well armed, especially the two outsiders, which flank the others. They appear to be so close to each other, as to pass freely from one to the other.”

“By the deep nine,” sang the quartermaster in the chains.

“Take in the courses and top-gallant sails, Mr. Birchall; hands by the anchor,” said the Captain. After a moment’s consideration he added: “‘Swift’s’ signal to continue under weigh. It is, I think, a flowing tide, Mr. Blagrave.”

“Yes, Sir, the flood is just made.”

“Pilot,” said the Captain, “I must run as close in as I can; we are a long way from these vessels yet. You know the ship’s

draught of water : if you oblige me to anchor, and I find deep water within me, you shall answer for it.”

“ De sounding was gradual, Capitaine, sare, to five fathoms ; after dat very bad, rock and shoal water, no can tell.”

“ And a half six,” sang the leadsman.

“ We are shoaling fast, Sir,” said the master.

“ And a half four,” sang the leadsman.

“ Put the helm up,” said the Captain, “ and as soon as you are in five fathoms clue up the topsails, and let go the anchor, Mr. Birchall.” He muttered to himself, “ The boats must do it. I don’t like boat work.”

The ‘ Boadicea’ and ‘ Goelan’ were anchored.

“ Make the ‘ Swift’s’ signal to come within hail. Man the boats, Mr. Birchall.”

“ The ‘ Swift’ Sir, and the officers of the watch are nearly within hail.”

“Swift a-hoy! How is Captain Lodge to-day?”

“In great pain, Sir, from gout, and incapable of moving.”

“You will stand in to cover: the boats have a stern anchor ready. What is your heaviest long gun?”

“A six-pounder, Sir.”

“Confound six-pounders, and the inventor of such useless trash,” muttered the Commodore; “stand directly in for those vessels, under your topsails, feeling the way with your lead. You will probably take the ground, with your keel, as you draw much more water abaft than forward, so that your bows being afloat, you can bring your broadside to bear upon the enemy, and divert their attention from the boats. Remember the tide is rising.”

“The Captain, Sir, who has insisted upon being brought on deck, assures you that he

is capable of obeying your orders, and will do so. He thanks you, Commodore, for giving him an opportunity of being of some use."

The brig made sail in-shore, whilst the armed boats assembled alongside of the 'Boadicea,' and Captain Bromhead came to receive his final orders.

"I think, Captain Bromhead," said Merivale, "that as you will have fourteen boats under your orders, you may form them into three divisions. Making a *détour* to the southward to avoid the heavy bow guns of the enemy, you can with two divisions attack the large lugger which flanks them to the south, with the boats commanded by yourself and Mr. Birchall; whilst Mr. Rutherford and Mr. McDonald with the third division of light boats, pretend to scour the beach; and whilst the enemy shall be fully engaged with you, they can board on the stern and quarter, and take the enemy

suddenly in flank. The 'Swift' will stand in to make a diversion, and draw the fire of the enemy upon her; but I doubt her getting near enough to be of much service. I have now explained my views to you, and if you wish to suggest anything I am ready to hear you."

"The plan of attack is quite satisfactory," said Bromhead, speaking thoughtfully, as if he had been calculating the chances of success. "Mr. Birchall, Mr. Rutherford," he added, "you understand; I would rather, Mr. McDonald, have had you with me; but it will give more weight to our pretext of shore work to see your red jacket there."

The boats were reported ready. Ralph asked Birchall to permit Brady to go with him.

It was now ascertained that the enemy were moored in one compact body, the larger luggers outside and the whole with stern

fasts to the shore, and their crews were seen by the telescopes coolly making preparations for a resolute defence. They saw the boats collected, and they knew our habits too well to entertain any doubt of an attack.

The officers took their stations in the boats, and Captain Merivale advanced to the gangway.

“Captain Bromhead,” he said, “the command to-day is yours, and it could not be in braver hands. The mode of attack is settled. I leave all else to you, and will not hamper you with orders; only I charge you not to land your men. The capture or destruction of these vessels is our object. You cannot, from the nature of the coast, see the approach of the enemy’s troops, but we shall see them from the mast-head. A red ensign at the main will give you warning, and the firing of guns will mark that they are close to the

scene of action. You will therefore only have to look to us, and not to the shore, with which I repeat you have nothing to do. And this is the more important as their telegraph has been at work since daylight, so that our force and our object have long been known at the nearest head-quarters. The 'Swift,' you see, is well in advance and will proceed till she grounds." He took off his hat and waved to them to advance.

There had been two unsuccessful candidates for the expedition; Shopronoff who was a gallant fellow, and pleaded with the Captain, that it would be matter of reproach to him should he not share the dangers of the day. But Merivale, felt that as his country was not at war with France, he should hardly be justified in sending him.

"Should the ship, Shopronoff, be attacked," he said, "we shall be happy to avail

ourselves of your gallant services ; but as we are here the assailants, I doubt the propriety of it.”

Shopronoff bit his lip, for however courteously expressed, he felt the refusal bitterly.

The other applicant did not trouble the Captain, who he knew would not have listened to him, and unluckily for him, he was at the moment in disgrace with Birchall, with whom, under other circumstances, he might have had a chance of success, but who now took pleasure in refusing him.

“ I won't have you and your tricks, Mr. Tit ; I have not forgotten that you plucked old Handley's tail this morning, as he stood up conning the ship, on the quarter-deck too.”

Thus repulsed, Tit thought of secreting himself in one of the boats, for he was determined to go ; but that could only end in

discovery and expulsion, which would subject him to much ridicule, and perhaps to punishment too. In his distress a bright thought struck him. Handley, the quatermaster, with whose tail Mr. Tit had taken such unofficer-like liberties, to the great displeasure of Birchall, was also coxswain of the barge, in which boat Birchall was to go.

“They think,” said Tit, indignantly, “that because I am not six feet high I can’t fight, we’ll see.”

He sought Handley forthwith, and being a great favourite of his, as the most mischievous youngsters always are with the best seamen, he had found him, as he expected, stuffing Birchall’s cloaks into a huge, painted canvas bag.

“Well, Handley,” he began, “so it’s all along o’ you that I am not to go?”

Now Handley felt that not to be permitted to go must be a terrible grievance, so he

raised up his eyes to the youngster, without ceasing from his task of ramming in one cloak after another.

“How so, Sir?” said he, with the utmost gravity.

“Why, if you had’nt dodged when I only just gave you a twitch by the tail, Birchall would not have seen me, and I should not have been mast-headed, and spited, and not let go in the boat like another man.”

Honest Handly thought it a hard case, and felt himself to have been the cause of it. He stood fast work for a moment, turned his quid, with a look of grave deliberation, and then shook his head.

“But how can I help you? t’ant possible!”

“Yes, but it is,” replied Tit, “and easy too.” And then assuming his most coaxing and persuasive manner, he added: “Only let me get into that bag. Carry

it down the side, and stow it away under the stern-sheet, and leave the rest to me.”

Handley looked at the urchin with admiration, and the point was soon settled; so Tit was snugly stowed away under the stern sheets of the barge, and Handly smiled a grim smile, and enjoyed the joke.

Tit heard the Captain's speech to his great delight, and away they went at a steady rate, led by the 'Boadicea's' barge, and Bromhead's boat making a considerable détour to the south, or right-hand, whilst the 'Swift' still steered straight down upon the enemy.

Captain Merivale watched the proceedings of the enemy with great interest.

“They are landing, and returning on board, and are no doubt securing their stern-fasts to the beach, Mr. Blgrave,” he said.

“Yes, Sir,” said the master, “and up go their boarding nettings, on the vessel

threatened, ay, and in the other out-sider too ; they don't seem disposed to leave anything to chance, these fellows."

"A gun of defiance from the outside lugger, and up go their colours," said the Captain. "It will be warm work, and take time too, to cut through those nettings," he continued : "Mast-head there, do you see any troops coming down from inland?" adding in a low voice : "We cannot see much farther here on the deck, than they do in the boats."

"I can see nothing of the kind, Sir," replied Mr. Lanyard, the mate, "and I can see some miles up the country ; for there is not a tree. All is bare."

The 'Swift' had now shortened sail to her topsails, but was still advancing slowly, the boats were advanced about half way, they brought to, and formed in three divisions ; two of which steered directly

down upon the outmost lugger, whilst the third steered for the shore, as if its object had been to scour the beach, and dislodge any concealed force there.

The ' Swift ' now opened her fire to cover the advance of the boats, but she had taken the ground too far off to produce much effect with her six pounder. Still the enemy returned her fire, from their bow guns, and the boats advanced steadily.

" There goes the first shot at the boats," said Mr. Blagrove, " far, far over them."

The cool, steady advance of the boats, the fire opened upon them, and the shots exchanged between the ' Swift ' and the bow guns of the luggers, began to produce great excitement amongst the deeply interested spectators in the ships.

CHAPTER V.

BUT as the boats drew nearer to the enemy, they began to fire grape-shot, which fell thick around. The rattle of grape-shot on the water had been the preconcerted signal for the rush forward. Bromhead stood up and waved his hat; the men burst into a joyous cheer, and the boats flew forward, impelled by lusty arms and willing hearts.

Birchall rose to stimulate his men to equal exertions; the point of honour was

to reach the enemy first, and they advanced abreast at a racing pace.

A loud laugh arose from the barge's crew; Birchall caught the direction of all eyes, and looked down to see what could have excited their merriment at such a moment; his eye met the sharp, shrewd countenance of Tit, protruded triumphantly from the cloak-bag. The boy nodded saucily at him, and Birchall joined in the general laugh at the pertinacity of the youngster. It was no time for reproof, and the boy's coolness under fire delighted Birchall, the whole thing being too much in the style that he loved, not to be readily forgiven.

"If you are knocked on the head, Mr. Tit, you young rascal, it's no fault of mine," said Birchall, giving the youngster his helping-hand to get him out of the bag.

Tit glanced triumphantly towards his

ally, old Handley, who responded by a slight shrug.

The rowers bent to their oars ; loud cheers arose in the leading boats, as they alternately headed each other, and the boats following them took up the cheer. The musketry from the enemy was returned with deadly effect by the gallant marines from the boats.

The intervening space was passed with arrow-like speed. Whilst partially obscured by the smoke, the boats were indistinctly seen by their anxious comrades in the ships, in close contact, and hand-to-hand fight with the enemy.

“ ’Tis awful to see this, and not to share the lot of our gallant friends,” said the Captain, aloud.

The Russian officer, Shopronoff, who had watched every step of the proceeding, looked reproachfully at the Captain.

“ I feel for you, Shopronoff, my brave

fellow," said Merivale. Then, as if relieved by the thought that he too could do something to aid them, he hailed the mast-head:

"Are you certain, Mr. Lanyard, that there are no troops approaching?" he said. "Be careful, for much depends upon it. Bend on the red ensign, ready to hoist it to the mast-head."

The mode of attack had rendered most of the enemy's guns useless. The 'Swift' had now necessarily ceased to fire, and the attack was concentrated upon one point. The Frenchmen, in their impetuosity, pressed forward, disputing with each other the post of honour, and of danger, exposing their crowded ranks to a deadly fire from the British marines. On the other hand, the boarding-nettings proved wholly impervious, and a fierce contest raged through them with pikes and bayonets.

The enemy standing upon a firm deck,

and striking downwards into the boats, which afforded but a precarious and unstable footing for our men, had all the advantage of position.

Deeds of desperate valour were done on both sides. At length Birchall had partly broken down the boarding-netting opposed to him, and as it gave way, the leaders on both sides rushed to the spot where, to all appearance, the fate of the contest was to be decided; but the shouts and cries of the eager combatants were suddenly overwhelmed by a cheer so full of terrible meaning, that the uplifted arm was arrested; the half-uttered shout died upon the tongue. Both parties knew that cheer of victory, that exulting cry which no words can describe, but which, once heard, remains indelibly fixed on the memory.

Ralph Rutherford and McDonald had held their party in hand, and appeared to be

guarding the line of beach against the approach of an enemy on that side. The men bit their lips in very rage, to see their comrades engaged whilst they looked on; but it is strict obedience alone which can give effect to the most daring courage.

They knew that their officers shared their impatience. Ralph calmly bided his time, whilst he restrained the ardour of his panting companions—mostly very young men—till he saw that all the enemy had rushed to meet the desperate assailants, who were forcing their way through the broken boarding-netting, which offered a narrow and difficult passage.

“Now, lads,” he said, with a cheerful voice, “we must board on the stern and quarter, and there are no nettings there to protect them. Be silent, and let each man, as he gains footing on the deck, face forward. One true British cheer will tell

our brave comrades that we have gained the deck, and will lead them to victory ; then follow me to the charge.”

With all the energy of impatient youth suddenly released from painful constraint, the boats silently advanced ; not a voice was heard ; little opposition was offered, and in an instant they had gained the stern and quarter of the vessel so fiercely contested amidships.

Ralph waved his sword ; one cheer followed, and to the terrible sound of their own triumphant voices, they charged the startled enemy in flank, with pike and cutlass, as one man, and thus cleared the way for Bromhead and Birchall to make good their entrance.

Their brave enemy, taken by surprise, gave way for the moment ; but, promptly reinforced, they rallied, returned to the charge, and in their turn became the

assailants ; but it was too late ; such moments are decisive.

McDonald and Rutherford, who had been nobly supported by Jack Brady, had united their forces with those of Bromhead and Birchall. They had no longer the disadvantage of a slippery, unsteady boat beneath their feet, but trod the firm deck like their opponents. They had now too the advantage of numbers, and drove them from ship to ship.

Beaten, but not subdued, the gallant Frenchmen had disputed every inch of ground whilst the slightest hope of success had remained, confidently expecting support from the land. At length those who remained, scrambled to the shore, and fled over the sandhills. They had necessarily thrown away their arms, and Bromhead gave orders that their retreat should not be molested.

As soon as the firing had ceased, and the smoke had cleared away, their proceedings in the hand to hand fight had been seen from the ships, and the very indistinctness with which they were beheld, had given to the scene a thrilling interest. The difficulty and delay occasioned by the boarding nettings, had been most keenly felt, all eyes had turned on Rutherford, and they had hailed his advance to the attack with shouts of joy. Had the wives and mothers of the gallant combatants witnessed the varied incidents of the fight, they could not have felt every turn of it more intensely, than did their brave and hardy comrades, who were of necessity excluded from sharing in it. Captain Merivale said little, but he watched the issue of the contest with intense interest.

“ Do you see no troops or artillery coming down from the interior ?” he said. “ Sweep the horizon carefully from the mast-head.”

He felt assured, from the length of time since the telegraph had first been at work, that troops must be near at hand.

“A small troop of horsemen are heaving in sight, from the sandhills on the left,” replied Mr. Lanyard; “but they are a long way off, Sir.”

The red ensign was hoisted at the main, the ‘Goelan’ and the ‘Swift’ repeated the signal; the latter vessel was afloat again.

But the exulting victors saw it not; they were wholly intent upon carrying off their prizes.

“Boats a-head to tow!” exclaimed Bromhead, “cut away the lashings, and separate these vessels from each other, Rutherford. Will you, Mr. Birchall, divide the boats for towing?”

They proceeded to take the vessels in tow, their cables and stern-fasts were cut.

“Go, Rutherford, and drag us off,”

resumed Bromhead, as he returned to the largest and inside vessel which they had last boarded, "for I see the red ensign at the mast-head. The enemy are coming down upon us."

Three of the captured vessels obeyed the impulse imparted to them by the boats, and drew slowly from the land, amidst animating cheers. Two small boats were sent off with the wounded men ; but the largest lugger, on board which was Captain Bromhead, did not move. Impatient at this, he exclaimed impetuously, "give way there in the boats!" But in vain did the rowers exert their utmost strength : she was immovable.

"She must have taken the ground with her keel" said Ralph. "We must do it with a jerk."

They slackened the tow-rope, drew the boats in a straight line ahead ; at the word of command they bent at once to their oars, the

boats started with a loud cheer, and with an effort that had nearly pulled the stern sheets out of the innermost boat, but the lugger did not move an inch.

Bromhead, in his obstinate and impetuous way, cried out :

“ Stand by, Rutherford, for another effort. Go she must and shall by ——, now for it, hurra !”

“ Stop ! stand fast !” cried Tit Tandy.

Bromhead turned round with indignation at the boy's presumption, but Tit pointed over the taffrail, and Bromhead rushed aft ; there was a stout sternfast secured to a bolt in the keel.

“ Stand fast the boats,” roared Bromhead : “ why did you not speak sooner ?” he said gruffly to the boy.

“ And why did'nt you look sooner ?” was the reply on the tip of Tit's tongue, but his acute eye saw that the speaker was not a

man to be trifled with, and for once Tit was prudent.

Bromhead was not a person who would deliberately lay his own faults at the door of another, and that other a helpless boy who could not answer him. The next moment he spoke kindly to Tit, and cursed his own folly and negligence.

“A gun from the ship, Sir,” said the youngster with a great air of humility.

“D—n the gun and the ship too,” replied Bromhead.

Rutherford now came on board to learn what the cause of delay might be, and to report what Bromhead well knew, namely, that all the ships were firing minute guns.

Bromhead was stepping into his gig. “By heaven,” he said in a great rage, “these rascals have got a sternfast under water to the shore, but I’ll cut it in one moment.”

“Let me go and do it, Sir.”

“Nay, the fault was mine and I will redeem it. Stay here and keep the boats upon their oars. We’ll have her off in one moment.” He proceeded to land with four hands in the gig.

“Three of the vessels,” said Merivale, thoughtfully, “are towed out by our boats, but the fourth remains fast with a line of boats ahead of her. ’Tis strange, unaccountable.”

“A boat is going on shore from the Prize,” reported the officer aloft.

“Yes,” said Merivale, “I see it or I would not believe it. Good heaven! are they mad? Get ready to fire a whole broadside. I charged them not to land.”

The guns were fired and repeated from the other ships; for they could all see from aloft the rapid approach of the enemy’s dragoons.

“How far are the cavalry off now?”

It was the nature of the ground and not the distance, which prevented their being visible from the deck.

“The first small body of cavalry is close at hand and advancing rapidly, but to the left, I now see a much larger force in the distance following them.”

Merivale shrugged his shoulders.

“I now see a third and much more numerous division, I think with artillery, descending from a distant hill on the right.”

“Fire three broadsides at intervals of two minutes,” said Captain Merivale, “and man the gig which brought the wounded men off with a fresh crew. We must enforce their attention, or they will assuredly be cut off.”

The gig was reported ready.

“Go, Sir,” said Merivale to the officer of the watch, “with my positive orders to Captain Bromhead to retire immediately. Let the vessel be burned or even abandoned,

but the boats shall return without a moment's delay to their ships, and I must see Captain Bromhead immediately. I am not accustomed to have my orders trifled with."

"Captain Merivale," said Shopronoff, "do me the favour to permit me to go in this boat."

He was earnest, and looked so wretchedly unhappy, that Merivale pointed to the boat, bowing his assent: then shook his head fretfully.

But short as was the interval thus occupied on board the 'Boadicea,' the face of affairs had assumed an entirely new aspect on shore.

Bromhead had leaped from his boat, axe in hand: the sternfast which had so cruelly perplexed him appeared to be a stout cable which, clenched round the fluke of an anchor buried in the sand, was parcelled and woulded. Rutherford rushed aft to the taffrail of the lugger.

“ Captain Bromhead,” he exclaimed, “ the ‘ Boadicea ’ is firing broadsides : the boats recall is flying.”

“ One moment,” replied the infatuated man ; the cablet was laid upon a block of wood, he raised his axe, and dealt a furious blow : the axe flew from his hand some yards off. His whole arm and shoulder were benumbed, as if struck by a torpedo.

“ Ten thousand curses upon the villains,” he said ; “ there is a chain beneath that woulding.”

Again Ralph hailed, and Bromhead, obstinate as he was, saw that the case was hopeless, and turned towards his boat ; but it was already too late. Several carbines were fired upon them from the crest of the sand-hill, scarcely twenty paces off ; and before they could well stand upon their guard, armed only with cutlasses and tomahawks,

a party of dragoons were hacking at them with their sabres.

Fortunately Rutherford had been fully aware of the pressing nature of the danger, and with his usual cool judgment, he had collected into the boats, a party of marines who had been placed in the prize. He and McDonald, therefore, with forty well armed seamen and marines, hastened to support or rather to save Bromhead, leaving young Tandy sole occupant of the prize to the very great disgust and indignation of that aspiring youth.

“Prepare to set her on fire,” Ralph said to the youngster. “You can swim like a fish, if you see matters going wrong;” he added in a low whisper. “Swim to the nearest boat, but be sure to burn the lugger.”

They reached the shore in an instant,

just as Bromhead, who fortunately had his pistols, had shot through the head a trooper who had severely wounded his coxswain, close beside him. It had been understood that McDonald should draw up his men in a body, out of the *mêlée*, one division to fire upon the dragoons, the other to be ready to receive the new comers, who, they felt well assured, were not far off.

Whilst Bromhead was engaged in a personal conflict with the officer, who had led the enemy, another of the troop had raised his sabre to split the captain's skull. Ralph saw it, and rushed in, and caught the blow upon his sword, whilst with his left hand he shot the assailant dead.

But a carbine shot brought Bromhead to the ground: the first small party of dragoons had suffered severely for their headlong gallantry, and being now greatly outnumbered, drew off, and repassed the sandhills, ha-

rassed in their retreat by a galling fire from the marines.

Rutherford, now commanding officer, assisted by McDonald, hastened to get the wounded into the boats, to make good his retreat; for the ships still fired their warning guns. Bromhead was insensible, but they thought he was not dead.

At this moment the gig landed with Shopronoff, and the orders to retreat. Bromhead and two of his men, who were badly wounded, were sent off in her. Ralph replied that he would retire as soon as he had secured his wounded men. But scarcely had he sent off the gig, when a large body of cavalry was down upon them. McDonald flew to his men, whose steady and deadly fire checked the foremost of the enemy, whilst an attempt to charge was repulsed by pike and cutlass, with considerable loss to the assailants.

Ralph saw that to retreat without first

repulsing the enemy effectually, would be to abandon his wounded men, and to expose his whole force to destruction. With Shopronoff, whom he gladly welcomed, and other officers of the boats, and with ten pikemen headed by Jack Brady, he prepared for the contest, now inevitable, for the enemy had rallied, with continually arriving reinforcements.

“McDonald,” he said, “leave eight men under the sergeant to shoot down the foremost of the enemy. You, with your bayonets, will be more necessary here. The pikemen will support us on the right, you on the left being in immediate contact with the sergeant, and the reserve, can direct them as you see best.”

There was a pause; it was clear that the enemy waited for reinforcements. Ralph availed himself of it to remove his wounded men to the boats.

During this moment of suspense, a shot

was heard from the lugger's quarter ; another and another followed.

“ Well done, youngster ! ” said Ralph, who, seriously as he was compromised, could not but laugh at the efforts of this strange boy to be in the fight, some way or other.

The fact was, that Mr. Tit, feeling his indignation at not being permitted to do as other men did, rather subdued by Ralph's order to prepare to burn the lugger, and especially by his confidential whisper, which implied trust in him, had resolved to deserve it. He opened the hatches, and found the cargo to consist of hemp, pitch, tar, tallow, and other combustible articles, very much to his satisfaction. He had little trouble therefore in making his arrangements ; it was only to open out a bale or two of hemp ; this he did, and returned to the deck. The enemy were before him ; was he to be a

mere spectator? There was a swivel in the lugger's quarter. Surely, thought the sagacious boy, they must have proposed to use this swivel. A slight search discovered a case of cartridges, and there was plenty of shot and wads, and several match-tubs. Quite delighted at this, he clapped his hands, and cut a caper on the deck for joy; then loaded his swivel-gun, and commenced forthwith to fire upon the enemy.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN MERIVALE was almost frantic at beholding imperfectly this horrid mêlée on the beach, without the power of sending efficient aid.

“What do you see now from the mast-head?” he exclaimed; “are the reinforcements of the enemy close at hand?”

“Some apparently belonging to the same corps; but the larger body of cavalry followed by artillery, are yet at a considerable distance, coming from the south.”

The Captain gnashed his teeth ; he felt that the effort was made to save the wounded ; for his orders had reached them, and that confused battle-field of horsemen mingled in close combat with our seamen and marines, seen from such a distance that it was impossible to draw any conclusion as to the result, was awful, knowing as he did, that an overwhelming force of the enemy with artillery was rapidly approaching, though happily yet at a considerable distance.

But Birchall had now seen the tumult on shore. He had got his prizes more than half way off, and he cast them adrift ; and ordering all the boats to the rescue of his friends, started in his gig, followed by the whole party, not a man remaining in the prizes.

This had been watched for from the ships with great interest, for short was the time in

which all these movements had taken place, under circumstances which were far from being foreseen, and short would evidently be the time during which any reinforcement could save even a remnant of their brave fellows, about to be overwhelmed by numbers.

Rutherford was quite aware of his danger, and felt intensely the value of every moment ; but he saw Birchall advancing to support him, and he was determined to carry off his wounded men. The enemy who had been gradually reinforced as other parties of their corps came up till they felt confidence again, showed themselves once more in force over the sand-hill, and prepared to charge down upon our men in one compact body.

Rutherford and McDonald, with Shopronoff, who was eager to distinguish himself, rallied every man not wholly disabled, and stood forth to meet the charge.

“Stand firm, lads,” exclaimed Ralph; “the boats are hastening to our assistance.”

On came the horsemen, waving their bright sabres in the sun, and shouting, as to a certain victory. The undaunted friends, and the handful of men who so fearlessly supported them, thought only of selling their lives as dearly as possible, and maintaining the honour of their flag.

Merivale saw the quick and eager advance of his last reserve. He looked at his watch.

“How far do you suppose the larger force with the artillery, from the scene of action?”

“I think more than a mile; and I think,” replied the officer at the mast-head, “they will have a *détour* to make, to avoid a deep ravine.”

“That is well,” said Merivale, “it is perhaps yet possible to draw off; but all depends upon time.”

“The gig has carried Captain Bromhead on board the ‘Goelan.’ He is desperately wounded, but the Doctor thinks he may live,” was the report made from the boat.

“He has led us into this,” muttered the Captain, “but poor fellow, he has paid the penalty of it.”

Birchall’s boats pressed on; and the marines prepared their muskets or inspected their priming, eager to be on shore. Ralph and Shopronoff were hard pressed, but aided by Brady with his pikemen, who galled the enemy’s horses severely, they kept their ground.

The gallant Highlander had been compelled to unite his small force; he was happily unhurt, and maintained the unequal combat with calm, unflinching courage, worthy of his name and of his corps. He felt the hopelessness of his situation, but his spirit quailed not.

Suddenly a distant cheer caught his delighted ear, another nearer, and a well-known voice was soon distinctly heard. It was Birchall with a strong reinforcement; and they could again fight for victory.

Who shall venture to describe the feelings which so rapidly succeeded each other in Rutherford and McDonald, at the sound of fresh comrades advancing to their relief? It was high time, for the gallant Shopronoff had fallen, with many of their best and bravest; but though panting and exhausted, they felt a renewal of strength. They at once resumed the offensive, and charged the horsemen. Birchall's fresh men supported them as they came up, and the pike proved a deadly weapon. The seamen plunged it into the horses, and the dismounted horsemen were cut down before they could recover themselves.

McDonald, thus relieved, reverted to his

original plan. He disentangled his remaining men from the confused mass of combatants, to draw them up on a slight elevation ; and as the enemy pressed on over the sand-hill, he kept up a most destructive fire of musketry upon their close ranks. Meanwhile, another and another boat arrived, filled with brave fellows, anxious to avenge their comrades, and to wrest the victory from the exulting foe.

The whole remaining force of the enemy had now been collected for a decisive charge : either the commanding officer was not aware of the near approach of a corps from a different quarter, or he was jealous, and thought to gain the battle before they could arrive to share his victory. Preparations were made to meet and to repel him. The wounded, with poor Shopronoff, were carried to the rear. Birchall assumed the command, and the whole party were

formed into one compact body. Rutherford, McDonald and other officers were in front ; Brady with a body of pikemen supported the marines, a small number of whom were still stationed a little in the rear to the left, whence they galled the enemy severely.

The rival forces were distinctly seen from the ship, as they stood facing each other for one awful moment, about thirty yards apart. But from the mast-head was also seen that threatening array of cavalry and artillery, which had so fortunately been obliged to make a *détour* ; these, the combatants saw not.

The French leader rode conspicuously forward, and waving his glistening sabre, he cried : “ En avant mes enfants, en avant.” His men responded to his call and his example, rushing forward with loud cries ;

but short as was the distance that separated them from the British, and rapid as was the movement of that gallant leader, he and many of his front rank fell, before they could reach the wall of pikes and bayonets that awaited them without flinching, so deadly was the fire of the small body of marines, posted in the rear by McDonald. The gallant Frenchman's voice had been distinctly heard, and his fall as distinctly seen by all, producing a very different effect upon the foremost ranks of the two parties.

The British seamen and marines recoiled for a few paces before the weight of the charge with the impetus of the down-hill career, but their line was unbroken, and they closed up shoulder to shoulder as their comrades fell. Pike and bayonet were firmly held and energetically applied, and the first impulse of the cavalry charge

having failed to break their line, they resumed the offensive with loud cheers, and forced back the baffled horsemen.

The enemy, who had lost many of their officers, and many of the bravest of their men, were compelled to retrograde. The British leaders allowed them no respite, but drove them in confusion over the sand-hill, plied to the last with a galling fire from the marines.

Birchall, who had been severely wounded, now fell from loss of blood, and once more the command devolved upon Rutherford. This was the auspicious moment so anxiously anticipated. The ships were still firing alarm guns, the wounded were speedily embarked and sent away. Ralph and McDonald undertook to cover the retreat in the 'Boadicea's' launch, with her carro-nade and a party of marines in the stern

sheets. The rest of the party towed off the wounded : not a man was left.

“The lugger’s on fire, Sir,” said a midshipman.

“Manfully done, young Tandy. Go alongside in the cutter and take him out,” said Ralph.

But Tandy, who had seen how matters were going on shore, to make assurance doubly sure, had sprinkled loose gunpowder in small quantities upon the opened bales of hemp, and so rapid were the flames, that he had nothing for it but to jump overboard. The lugger was in a short time one mass of fire, fore and aft, whilst a partial explosion took place, which blew out her stern. Tandy was picked up by the cutter.

Joyfully had Captain Merivale seen them quit the fatal strand, for fresh bodies of troops were on the point of appearing over

the hills. He knew his loss had been severe, but he had feared it would have been much more so.

Scarcely had the launch taken up her position in the rear of the retiring boats, when the repulsed dragoons once more descended the sand-hills with large reinforcements; and furious to see that their expected prey had escaped them, rescued by the promptitude of their leaders at the very moment when they had hoped to overwhelm them, and cut them off to a man, they forced their horses into the waves, firing their carbines in impotent rage, till several of them were shot down by the marines in the launch.

Ralph would not waste his grape-shot upon scattered individuals; but as the officers recalled them and formed them into one compact body, his twenty-four pounder carronade, with grape shot, struck into the

centre of the mass, knocking over both horses and riders in strange confusion. But whilst in the act of firing another shot at them as they passed over the top of the sand-hill, a chance ball struck him, and he fell into the arms of Jack Brady, who had never once quitted him.

Grieved as McDonald was, his first thought was to avenge his friend. He caught the fallen match, and fired the gun, and not without effect, for at that very moment the advancing troops made their first appearance, and in an instant long lines of fresh troops and of artillery lined the crest of the hill.

But the boats were already beyond serious annoyance, though, had this formidable force arrived a few minutes sooner, had not the ravine detained them, not a man could have got off. Such are the chances and changes of war. Rutherford's promptitude had saved them. The artillery opened an ineffectual

fire; for boats, when end-on and beyond the reach of grape, offer little mark.

Poor Rutherford was evidently in a state of great suffering. The retiring boats no longer needed the support of the launch, and the boat's crew, anxious on Ralph's account to get on board, bent to their oars with an energy that was marvellous, after the toils of such a day, and soon placed him in the skilful hands of Griffiths.

Captain Merivale was in great wrath with Bromhead, whose wilfulness and obstinacy had led him into the disobedience of orders, which had caused all the mischief; for the object of the expedition, as planned by Merivale—the capture of the vessels—had been accomplished with small loss; and if the last vessel had been burnt at once, their success would have been perfect. But the offender was lying desperately wounded, and not expected to live.

Boats were sent to collect the three captured vessels, and the 'Goelan' was ordered, by signal, to take charge of them.

"Well, Mr. Griffiths," said the Captain; "a pretty business this. How are the wounded getting on?"

"Mr. Birchall, Sir, was struck down in the *mélée* by some blunt weapon, which stunned him for a time, and there is a simple fracture of the left arm. He thinks little of that, and will soon be well. Shopronoff had his right leg broken by a shot which passed through; but I do not apprehend any evil consequences, and he is not at all alarmed himself, though this is a more troublesome case. But Mr. Rutherford has received a wound, upon the consequences of which I cannot venture to give an opinion until the ball shall have been extracted, for hitherto I have been unable to detect the ball. We must hope for the best, but he suffers much,

though he bears it with great fortitude, which, in a case like his, is of much importance. I will try again to trace the ball, but it was necessary to give him a little respite, poor fellow !”

Merivale shrugged his shoulders.

“ ’Tis thus we pay the penalty of other men’s imprudence. Poor Rutherford!” he said.

“ We have to our share,” resumed the Doctor, “ thirteen severely wounded ; five of them dangerously. I do not include the slight wounds, which are numerous. I can scarcely speak with confidence of results yet.”

“ I will not detain you, Griffiths,” said the Captain. “ Let me know how you get on, and especially when you shall have extracted the ball from poor Rutherford ; it was a chance shot at the last moment.”

Merivale proceeded to the deck ; the signal was made for the first lieutenants of the ‘ Goelan’ and the ‘ Swift.’

“How is Captain Bromhead, Mr. Graves?” asked Merivale; “does the Doctor hope to save him?”

“Oh yes, Sir!” replied Mr. Graves; “but I fear it is a bad case. The Captain talks wildly at times, Sir, about a chain under the wounding, and of not having set fire to the prize.”

“Umph!” said Merivale; “no great sign of delirium in that. I shall venture to consider him capable of taking charge of his ship. Prepare to receive the wounded; then you will provision and man the prizes. I intend you should take them to England. Tell Captain Bromhead so, and that I will send him his orders. Give him my best wishes for his recovery. Have you brought your report of killed and wounded?”

“I have, Sir,” replied Mr. Graves, and he departed to execute his orders.

“Well,” said Merivale to himself, “I

RALPH RUTHERFORD.

have said it, and I do wish him well, though if he had not been so severe a sufferer, I would have brought him to a court-martial for disobedience of orders. But the fellow is brave; one cannot but feel for him."

The first lieutenant of the 'Swift' was announced.

"I am well satisfied, Sir, with Captain Lodge's exertions, though I cannot approve of captains of sloops of war having the gout like rich country squires. I wish he had been well enough to have commanded the boats this morning. It was his right by seniority, and he would have done it well. Send such of your wounded as the surgeon may select, to the 'Goelan.' Mr. Worrall," he continued, "hoist in the launch."

In the midshipman's berth, the whole thing was discussed with great freedom. Bromhead's headstrong obstinacy was admitted to have caused all the mischief.

“Very possibly,” said Lanyard; “but he is a plucky old chap for all that.”

And upon this ground he stood absolved. Most of them had been present, and some of them had been hurt, but the verdict was unanimous.

Tit had talked rather largely and loudly about his doings.

“And how came you to get leave to go at last? for I heard Birchall, in his blunt way, tell you point blank that you should not go. But they would not trust you on shore, Tit, for fear the dear child should be hurt,” said Lanyard, sneeringly.

“Sir!” said the indignant Tit, “I’d have you to know that Rutherford confided the charge of the prize to me, and that he whispered to me—for he saw what was coming—‘Tandy,’ he said, ‘if matters go wrong with us on shore, set fire to the prize. I leave it to your discretion.’”

A general shout of laughter interrupted this narrative, and exceedingly disturbed the tranquillity of Titus Tandy. He drew himself up to his full height, and looking marlinspikes at Mr. Lanyard, who had led the chorus, and was moreover guilty of being above six feet high :

“Yes, Sir,” he resumed, “*discretion*. Rutherford knows who to trust. His sharp wit saw how matters must end, and he would not discourage his men ; so, knowing that he could trust me, he said in a low whisper, ‘Tandy, if things go wrong with us, burn her, and swim to the nearest boat.’ He saw it all, did Rutherford, poor fellow ! and he’s hard hit, and it was no fault of his neither.”

The pathos of Tit’s oratorical conclusion softened all hearts ; for there was a general feeling that, but for Ralph’s skilful promptitude, matters would have been much worse ;

but Tit, like many other orators, did not know when to leave off.

“When I shot down the enemy’s General with the swivel-gun—” he resumed; but such a storm of jeering and laughter arose, that his small voice was drowned.

The indignant little hero, swelling in his rage, was defying the whole party in a lofty strain, when the messenger-boy tapped him on the shoulder, saying:

“Please, Sir, you are wanted to go in the jolly-boat.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE 'Goelan' had departed for England with the prizes, and such of the wounded as it was deemed necessary to send ; for Merivale had shrewdly concluded that Bromhead's exclamations about a chain under the wounding, and not having burnt the prize, were proofs that he knew what he was about, and was mentally equal to the charge, though desperately wounded.

The ball had been, with much difficulty, extracted from Rutherford's wound, and all

the wounded who remained on board were doing well. The 'Boadicea' was herself again, and stood away to the westward with the 'Swift.'

Captain Lodge had recovered from his fit of the gout, and Merivale found him to be a very zealous and intelligent officer; and if he did command a small brig at fifty years of age, it was no fault of his. He had long been first lieutenant to an officer of some reputation, founded pretty much upon Lodge's skill and gallantry, and who had not found it convenient to part with him.

"Sir," said Mr. Griffiths, in making his daily report; "all my patients are getting on, except Mr. Rutherford. I had flattered myself that he would have mended rapidly, but I much fear that something has been lodged deep in the wound which will require another difficult and dangerous operation."

Merivale was grieved to the heart.

“Is there,” he said, “an immediate necessity for this operation?”

“On the contrary, Sir, he is not in a state at present to bear it. The wound is in a very irritable, unhealthy state, and he is very feverish.”

“I wish I had sent him home in the ‘Goelan,’” said the Captain, “but it’s too late now. Shopronoff is doing well, I believe; he is a brave fellow. Mr. Birchall has been on deck, and will soon resume his duty, he tells me, but it must not be too soon, Mr. Griffiths. Impatience must be controlled.”

Captain Merivale being left to himself, his mind reverted to Ralph.

“He shall not be lost if I can save him,” he said. “I am free to run to the westward: it is my best cruising-ground; and who knows but that we may fall in with some homeward-bound ship from the Mediterranean?”

Poor Ralph, meantime, was restless and

feverish. He had a wound which Griffiths knew not of, for when the 'Goelan' had been despatched, he had been under the knife, suffering cruelly, and the fact had never been mentioned to him. It would go forth on her arrival, that he had been dangerously wounded, and there would be no letter from him to relieve the anxiety of his mother. What conclusions would they draw? He writhed at the thought of what those so dear to him must feel, and this was no moderator of fever. Griffiths found him worse.

Merivale was informed of this. He went on deck; the wind was north-east, and blowing a strong breeze.

"Make the signal to steer west," he said, to the officer of the watch.

"Mr. Blagrove," he continued, "I shall run on for the present on this course."

There was some surprise, but no remark was made. Birchall now resumed his duty;

the sling on his arm was inconvenient, but that was a trifle. Shopronoff was necessarily confined to his cabin, but he was a docile patient, and having an inordinate love of approbation, was so much pleased with the deference now shown him in admiration of the gallantry he had displayed, that it is very doubtful whether he did not rejoice in his wound. At any rate, he appeared perfectly contented with it, and passed whole hours with his violin, playing his national airs, and offering up his vows to his Rosemary.

“Sweet Rosemary, she vas live at number first,” excited no ridicule now.

“The Captain is pushing the ship a long way to the westward, Master,” said Birchall.

“He has his reasons for that,” replied Mr. Blagrove. “You had better ask him what they are.”

Birchall shook his head and laughed.

“Catch me at it,” he said.

On the third day, late in the afternoon, the 'Swift' was, as usual, two miles on the weather beam. A wreck was seen nearly a-head; there was a strong breeze, with every appearance of an easterly gale coming on.

"Open the wreck on the starboard bow," said the Captain. "Let us see what she is before dark."

It was a small brig, apparently water-logged. She appeared to have been deserted by her crew, for the boat was gone, and the tackle hanging loose.

The 'Boadicea' brought to, and sent a boat to ascertain if there was any living person on board her; but there was so much sea going, and the dismasted hull rolled so deeply in the water that it was difficult to board her, and apparently useless, for they could see no sign of life about her. It was getting dark, and she appeared to be sinking; but as they were about to return to their

ship, they thought they heard a feeble cry. They listened, but it was not repeated, at least, they could not hear it, but the wind roared as in mockery. As the boat did not immediately return, a second boat was sent; for it could only be with extreme danger that the wreck could be approached near enough for boarding, and a second boat at hand was necessary to secure the crew of the first, should she be dashed in pieces in the attempt, which was not improbable.

“There is a handkerchief waved, I saw it,” said the coxswain of the cutter.

To lay a boat alongside the wreck was clearly impracticable, yet it was certain that a living creature was there in a state of helplessness, probably left by unfeeling companions because he was helpless. A conference was held by the boats.

“I am ready to board her,” said Jack Brady; “only row close up to the wreck of

her mainmast, which is still hanging on to leeward by some of the shrouds."

It was the only possible mode of effecting their object. Others volunteered, but Brady begged to go alone, and the officer of the boat agreed with him that more men going would create confusion; for it was fast getting dark. Having stripped himself to his trowsers, Brady took a small line in his hand, and watching his opportunity, he sprang from the cutter's bow upon the confused mass of spars and rigging, which was heaving and occasionally turning over in the sea. Once there, and having escaped entanglement in the moving mass, an active and powerful man accustomed to danger, to whom the roaring of winds and waves was familiar, and the violent motion of a ship equally so, there was no great difficulty in getting on board the wreck, which was very low in the water.

The wind and sea were rapidly increasing ; the two boats, as had been arranged, drew as close as they could to the stern of the wreck, and watched intently. They had not waited long when a voice cried distinctly : “ Look out there ! ” and was heard above the howling wind and the splash of the waves over the wreck, now nearly even with the water’s edge. “ Look out there,” it repeated, “ and stand by to haul in upon the line.”

A feeble splash was heard, and a poor miserable looking, half-starved, half-drowned wretch was drawn into the boat.

“ Now look out for me, lads,” said the same manly voice, and in an instant they caught hold of Brady.

It was high time : the ‘ Boadicea ’ had hoisted lights for the boats, and the wind and sea had so rapidly increased that it

was with the greatest difficulty they got on board, and they were obliged to hoist up the unfortunate man in the boat.

Within half an hour the ship was running under close reefed top-sails to the westward.

“In what condition is that poor man, Doctor?” said the Captain.

“He is in the last stage of exhaustion, Sir. I may restore him for a time, but nothing can save his life.”

“And Rutherford?” he asked.

“Mr. Rutherford is easier, but I can only apply soothing medicines to alleviate his sufferings. He should be placed in the hands of the ablest operators, with every advantage of situation, and his mind at ease, which is, I fear, by no means the case.”

“I suspected as much,” said the Captain, “and am doing all I can for him. By

to-morrow we shall be in the track of homeward-bound ships. God send we may meet one. But do not speak of this."

On the following morning Mr. Griffiths went to the Captain at an unusually early hour.

"Sir," he said, "the poor man who was saved by Brady yesterday, appeared to be greatly refreshed by a few hours' sleep; but Brady coming in to see him, he fixed his eyes upon him, and shrieked with terror.

" 'Take him away! take him away!' he exclaimed frantically, 'but don't let *her* come near me.'

"This was evident delirium. I administered a composing draught, and he slept for two hours, when, waking up, he looked cautiously and fearfully round him.

" 'No!' he said: 't'was but a dream—a terrible dream—but where am I? how

came I here? tell me, in mercy tell me, can I live, can I recover? no, no, it cannot be! I feel that all is over with me! but where am I? A confused recollection of having been thrown overboard haunts me. When they took to the boats they left me. I was sick and helpless; I begged them to take me—but they cursed and spurned me; they took the dog and left the Christian to starve or drown. Yet how dare I call myself a Christian!’ Oh, Captain Merivale,” continued the Doctor, “t’was fearful to hear him! his words still ring in my ears. I shall never forget one of them.”

“’Tis indeed awful; but what followed?”

“‘I a *murderer*!’ he said, ‘a dying murderer!’ he spoke in a tone of the deepest agony. ‘I dreamed that I saw one whom I had cruelly, basely injured, but it was a dream. I was honest once, and frequented

church, and prayed too, as my poor mother taught me—but those were happy days; and I thought it more easy to rob my master than to earn my bread honestly. And I had a partner in my guilt. She betrayed me, and scorned me—and I murdered her!’ he clasped his hands in despair.”

“It is a strange rhapsody; or are we to consider it a confession?” said Merivale.

“He expresses a wish to confess fully, and says that another man has been condemned for his crime. I have said that you will take his deposition: there is no time to lose.”

Captain Merivale hastened to the hospital: Brady was standing near the door.

“What do you know of this man, Brady?” he said.

“Nothing, Sir,” said Brady. “To the

best of my knowledge, I never set eyes on him before.”

“ I suspect that you know more about him than you are aware of. Follow me, but do not show yourself.”

The unhappy Balders (for it was he) was so fearfully altered; crime and consequent misery had so aged and withered him, that his own mother would not have known him. Yet he was still young.

The poor dying wretch made a circumstantial confession of the murder, asserting that he had not premeditated it. The terms in which the ill-fated woman had spoken of him to his detested rival had maddened him; he had been kicked and beaten, and thrust out of the house; but it was the sight of the handkerchief which awakened the thought of a double revenge: he had murdered the woman that his rival Scraggs might be hung for it.

The subsequent sufferings of this miserable man no words could describe, and they are foreign to our tale. He received Brady's hearty forgiveness for having kidnapped him ; and being assured that every effort should be made to send home his confession to save Scraggs, he appeared to be mentally relieved, though his bodily sufferings had increased.

Captain Merivale suggested the consolations of prayer ; he looked up gratefully, and they knelt and prayed for him. It was evident that he joined mentally, though he had now lost the power of speech, and in a few minutes after, he ceased to breathe.

The death of Balders created a considerable sensation in the 'Boadicea.' Various rumours had gone abroad about his kidnapping and murdering, and it had been argued that the Captain would not bury him like a Christian ; but the usual preparations were made, and the body was committed to the deep, amidst the

awe-stricken silence of the crew, who often in their night-watches related the crimes and the sufferings of Balders.

The easterly gale died away, the weather became mild and fine, and as a light westerly breeze sprang up, the signal was made for the 'Swift' to look out a-head, but not beyond reach of signal. The following morning, soon after daylight, she made the signal for a strange sail, south-west, steering to the eastward, which brought her rapidly towards the squadron. She was soon made out to be a man of war, and by eight o'clock she made her number: it was the 'Albatross.'

"Mr. Griffiths," said Captain Merivale, "tell Rutherford we will send him home in the 'Albatross;' and starting from a point so far to the westward at the close of an easterly gale, he will see that he has a fair chance of arriving before the 'Goelan.' I understand that his not having been able to write to his

friends by the 'Goelan,' has caused him great uneasiness, but her convoy will have delayed her much. It remains to see who now commands the 'Albatross.'"

Ralph was delighted at his prospect of a rapid passage to England. He felt the weight of the Captain's reasoning, and his mind was greatly relieved. Meanwhile every preparation was made for the removal. The brig brought to, and the Captain was announced.

"My dear Lord George," said Merivale, "how happy I am to see you. I congratulate you upon your promotion. Here's your old friend Rutherford, desperately wounded in an unlucky affair upon the coast, he requires to be conveyed to England with the least possible delay. You are the very person to whom I would most willingly confide the care of him."

"My poor friend shall have every attention

I can pay him," said the young officer. "Permit me to write a note to order the necessary preparations on board, and my surgeon can return in the gig, to hold a consultation with Mr. Griffiths. I hope Rutherford is well enough to see an old friend and messmate."

Mr. Griffiths warned Lord George not to stay long with Ralph, as he wished to husband his strength for the removal; but Ralph was so delighted at the prospect of getting home before the arrival of the 'Goelan,' and so gratified to be the guest of his kind and warm-hearted friend, that he had for the moment forgotten his sufferings; and in two hours, having taken an affectionate leave of McDonald and his friends in the 'Boadicea,' and especially of Captain Merivale, who charged him to write to him, his cot, carefully slung upon a pole under the superintendence of Jack Brady, was hoisted into

the barge. The whole ship's company stood uncovered to take their last sight of one they loved and honoured. It was intimated that he was not in a state to bear noise, and the silence with which the operation of hoisting out the suspended cot was performed, was deeply impressive. Brady, who was coxswain of the boat, officiated with much zeal.

Lord George having received despatches and a copy of Balders's confession for the Admiralty, preceded the 'Boadicea's' barge a full half hour; and when Ralph reached his friend's cabin in safety, he felt more at ease than he had done for many days. Griffiths saw him placed in great comfort, and having assured him that Mr. Strong, the surgeon of the 'Albatross,' was a careful and skilful officer, bade him farewell. Not a moment was lost in making sail, for the wind was fair, and before night they had lost sight of the 'Boadicea.'

Rutherford had been left by his considerate friend to repose, after the fatigue he had undergone; and as the thought of Julia, which had hitherto cruelly harassed him, had now become once more a source of delight, though not unmixed with anxiety, and he was daily and rapidly approaching that loved cottage where his heart told him that Julia and his mother would be inseparable, he got more sleep, and became less feverish. He could now enjoy the conversation of his friend, who, in the true spirit of hospitality, carried on his habitual duties as if Ralph had not been there. Every day the chart was spread, and the ship's position accurately ascertained, and the decreasing distance of Old England was indeed most cheering to the wounded man.

Carleton often spoke to him of their old companions.

“I was in great luck,” he said, “for my

uncle hoisted his flag in the Mediterranean, and I had scarcely joined him as flag-lieutenant, when Captain Tring, of the 'Albatross,' died, and I was forthwith put into her. She is a fine brig, but having been five years in commission, required repairs, and had been ordered home. This suited me exactly, for I shall get a run in England, be appointed to a new sloop, and rejoin my uncle. They must promote you, Ralph, and we will go out together."

Ralph smiled.

"You are the same sanguine, warm-hearted fellow as ever, I see," he replied; "but there is no promotion for me. I must be content, if I recover, to work my way. But what of our Jamaica friends? Have you heard nothing of any of them?"

"Not much. By the bye, you recollect Lutkins, so proud of his brig, and of being first upon the list for promotion—he tha_t

almost killed my old Captain in the gravel-pit, and used to speak to a lieutenant with such a disgusting air of condescension, and turn up his nose at a midshipman?"

"Stop, stop," said Ralph, laughing, "we must acquit him of intending to kill Dawson; for a death vacancy would not have availed him. He was on the Admiralty list. Now death vacancies belong to the Admiral, and our good old chief was a very discerning man, and saw through Lutkins. He would never have given a vacancy to him."

"Then, as he had no interest in killing Dawson, we must acquit him of the intention; but Dawson was an elderly and apparently a nervous man. He was said also to be what is called 'well to do in the world,' and Lutkins probably speculated upon his invaliding if he should break some of his bones. An invaliding vacancy would have fallen to Lutkins as first on the Admiralty list."

“As you are determined to bring him in guilty,” replied Ralph, “there is not much use in arguing the point. I detest the fellow. What were you going to tell me about him?”

“Why, I met Sandford at Gibraltar, who was fresh from Jamaica, and he told me that Lutkins was under arrest for not doing his utmost to bring an enemy’s squadron to action, for which his brig was most favourably placed, but he allowed another brig to sweep past him, and do the thing well. His own officers were furious, and the Admiral, who saw it, ordered the court-martial. It is generally thought that it will go hard with him.”

“It is strange, but I never took such a dislike to any other man, and you seem to dislike him equally.”

“To be sure I did. But now I shall leave you to your own agreeable reflections. Please

God we shall be in to-morrow, when I shall land you, and Mr. Strong will see you safe home."

Ralph managed to write a few lines to his mother, which were landed in a fishing-boat, off Exmouth, in charge of a servant, who was directed to proceed, with all possible dispatch, to Bewdley Cottage.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. CARTERET was a very punctual man, and he arrived with his brother and Dr. Seacombe an hour before dinner-time. Uncle Peter's delight at having exchanged the noise and bustle of a London hotel, and the perpetual calls of business connected with the transfer of his property to this country, for the quiet of Trevor House, and the society of his nieces, could scarcely be expressed; and he brought down rich presents to both of them. It was a delightful family scene.

Next day, the Evandales came to congratulate them, and Mrs. Rutherford to spend the day. Julia was never tired of her instructions in the art of housekeeping, and they passed whole hours in private conferences upon this and other interesting subjects.

Weeks passed on, but no letters arrived from Ralph. Mrs. Rutherford's society was Julia's greatest consolation. Her father assured her that there could be no probability that Ralph would have any opportunity of sending letters; and as she could not but admit that this was really the case, she tried to content herself with this state of things. Mrs. Rutherford was making some repairs at the cottage, and had consented to remain at Trevor House for a fortnight. This gave them all great pleasure.

"Laura," said Uncle Peter, "you do not appear to attend to lectures on housekeeping

as Julia does. I wish the course was ended, for we really see nothing of Julia or of Mrs. Rutherford either. I have thrice asked Julia to look at my beautiful camelias, and fond of flowers as she is, she always says 'to-morrow, uncle.' ”

Julia was now the first to seize the newspaper, which had always hitherto been completely neglected by her. Just as she was about to pay the long-deferred visit to Uncle Peter's camelias, the newspaper arrived, and she once more tried his patience.

“ Good Heaven!” she exclaimed, “ what a horrid report. What terrible people these Frenchmen are ! There never was anything half so dreadful as this.”

“ Why, my dear,” said Uncle Peter, “ they are not coming to invade us, are they ? But that's an old story.”

“ Much worse than that,” said Julia with

a voice and manner which almost alarmed her kind-hearted uncle.

“My dear Julia,” said Mrs. Rutherford, “’tis but a report, and we know what these French bulletins are.’”

“But what is it?” said Uncle Peter.

“It is a statement that a large body of seamen and marines having landed from an English frigate, a corvette, and a brig—mind, uncle, the exact description of the ships—a body of cavalry marched down upon them, sabred them all, and drove the rest into the sea. Only think how dreadful!”

“My dear Julia,” said Mrs. Rutherford, “the very absurdity of the account is consoling; besides, love, it states no object for their landing, and concludes by saying, not a man on their part was killed or wounded.”

“Ralph,” said Uncle Peter, “has often spoken of Captain Merivale as a cautious,

prudent, and talented officer, whose maxim it was never to incur a risk beyond the value of the object in view. Is such a man likely to land his seamen and marines for no earthly purpose but to get them cut to pieces by French dragoons? Nonsense: depend upon it, 'tis a mere fanfarronade."

Julia felt somewhat reassured, and Mrs. Rutherford, who had been much more alarmed than she chose to admit, could not but confess the justice of Uncle Peter's remarks. But Ralph's last words lay heavy at her heart, and too well she recollected those words: they were ever ringing in her ears. But she suppressed her feelings for Julia's sake, and Mr. Carteret, who now joined them, having laughed at the idea of attaching any importance to a bulletin which could assume such a bloodless victory, they obeyed the dinner bell and separated.

"Do you recollect, Laura," said her

agitated sister, " what poor Ralph said about doing something to deserve me. Alas ! that unhappy expression now haunts me night and day, though I attributed no importance to it then ; hurried and agitated as I was by such a strange succession of surprises and alarms, and only sensible to the misery of parting from him at the very moment when it had first been permitted to me to avow my affection for him. I had scarcely heard them at the time, but when I recalled his every word, his every look, then did I recollect all. Has he not been hurried by this fatal idea into some desperate attempt, and fallen a victim to the romantic notion of gaining distinction in battle ? Alas ! alas ! I listen to their arguments, and try to feel convinced that we have no cause for alarm, but when left to myself, I shudder at my own thoughts. Nor dare I speak my fears to

Mrs. Rutherford ; for it seems to me, that she too strives to conceal hers from me. It s terrible ! Where shall I turn for comfort ?”

Laura could only weep for her and with her : she had no power to offer consolation.

The same feeling more or less oppressed the whole family. Julia and Mrs. Rutherford did not confer freely upon the subject which oppressed them, and yet they drew a melancholy satisfaction from each other’s presence.

The newspapers took up the subject, and dates and circumstances were stated, which were said to prove the impossibility of such an affair having taken place. Captain Merivale’s well established character for sense and prudence was a more powerful argument. Still they admitted it was but too probable that something of the kind had occurred, though perhaps greatly exaggerated and misrepresented in these

statements. Yet was it torture to these noble-minded women to weigh the probabilities for or against the fate of Ralph.

At length, they sought some consolation in mutual confidence. Julia confessed to Mrs. Rutherford the alarming expression used by Ralph in that dreadful moment, when the fatal gun, requiring immediate obedience, had torn him from her, to plunge him once more into fearful dangers. Both knew his impetuous temper, his high and stern sense of duty, his gentle generous nature, and it was some consolation that they could mingle their tears.

This repetition of the fearful expression, which so haunted the mother's recollection, was terrible to her, but she did not betray her alarm or aggravate Julia's terrors by revealing how much, and how deeply they were shared by herself.

Julia was so unequal to mixing even

with her family, whilst so awful a doom hung over her, that Mrs. Rutherford invited her to return with her to the cottage.

“Julia my child,” she said, “you are young in the world’s ways, and have yet to learn its sorrows and their remedy. Blessed with youth and health, and loving friends, and this world’s goods, it was a bright and sunny world to you, and in the innocence and inexperience of your heart, you have deemed that it would ever be so, and the rude check your smiling prospects have received, has shaken you in the innermost recesses of the heart. I cannot blame you, my love, for I, with all my sad experiences of past sorrows, have scarcely felt this awful visitation less. Alas ! my sweet girl, the husband of my youth was the counterpart of him for whom we weep and tremble. He was dearer to me than a thousand lives. The day of battle

came, that dreadful first of June, and England rejoiced in a splendid victory, made ten times more valuable by the aspect of the times. But my adored Ralph was amongst the wounded. I got no letters; his ship, terribly shattered, had arrived at Portsmouth; I flew thither with my infant to cheer his sufferings by the sight of his child, whom he had never seen, and to tend him as only a wife can do. I found him weak, sadly weak from loss of blood. The doctors told me they had hope; and he himself was confident of recovery. The sight of his boy delighted him, and we laid down plans for future happiness.

“ Julia, fever came on. He did not know me. He did not recognise his child. That noble mind was gone; that generous affectionate spirit had fled. He recovered his senses for one short sad hour Oh! what a relief was that,

but he was then conscious that he was dying. I will spare you the sad recital. I sought for peace and consolation where only it was to be found.

“Years of poverty and toil rolled on, and my boy grew up to bless me. Rutherford had great connections, but they had treated him with cruel neglect. His father had displeased them in marriage, and he loved the memory of his mother, whose life they had embittered, and he cast them off as resolutely as they did him. He never spoke of them.

“It was when I lost him, Julia, that I threw myself upon my God; and bent in resignation and prayed for my child. My prayer was heard, and my poor exertions were blessed, restoring me to happiness and peace. But Julia, I leaned upon a worldly staff: I idolized my son!”

She resumed after a pause: “Let us

together, my sweet child, humble ourselves in prayer. God is merciful!"

Such were the conversations which led Julia to self-examination—to fervent prayer. She felt that amidst her prosperity she had led a vain and frivolous life, and under the guidance of her real mother, she gained strength to put her whole trust in God.

'Tis thus that our misfortunes may be converted into blessings. The days rolled on in anxious hopes and fears, but no longer in hopeless despair. Julia paid frequent visits to her family, and found them almost as much occupied with the cause of her sorrows as herself. Uncle Peter, as usual when anything worried him, had the gout. Mr. Carteret frequently rode into the town to get his letters and papers a little earlier, but he returned shaking his head in reply to poor Julia's inquiring look; and thus passed another weary fortnight,

during which even Mrs. Rutherford faltered, and Julia began to despair.

At length Mr. Carteret, who used every possible means to get early information, was told that a black corvette, with three prizes, had passed through the Needles, and was gone up to Spithead, and that her Captain was said to have been desperately wounded. This must be the 'Goelan,' and they should hear of Ralph.

An express was sent off, and returned next morning. It was indeed the 'Goelan,' and Captain Bromhead was lying in a very precarious state at Haslar.

The first lieutenant, in reply to Mr. Carteret's note, which had been addressed to the commanding officer, informed that gentleman, that Mr. Rutherford had received a musket-shot near the shoulder; but it had been extracted, and that it was judged better that

he should remain on board his own ship, as no danger was anticipated ; but, as he had just undergone a painful operation, he had not been able to write. The officer added, that Mr. Rutherford had distinguished himself so much, that there could be no doubt of his promotion.

Having hastily communicated the contents of the express to his brother and Laura, he rode off to the cottage.

The gallop of a horse, and his sudden stop at the garden-gate, brought forth both the mourners.

“ He is hurt, but he is safe, and in no danger !” exclaimed Mr. Carteret.

Julia seemed scarcely to comprehend her father’s meaning. Mrs. Rutherford was more composed, but deadly pale. Mr. Carteret led them into the cottage, and the dispatch was read again and again.

“Wounded!” said Julia. “A ball extracted! How then can he be called safe, or out of danger?”

“Be calm, my love,” said Mrs. Rutherford. “It is some comfort to know that he lives, and yet—”

She stopped short.

“And yet, my more than mother!” cried Julia, hastily, “and yet they told you his gallant father was wounded, but was safe—was out of danger—and he died!”

It was a sad scene for Carteret, who had hoped that the tidings he had brought would have given some consolation; but so it is with us all. What would they not have given some minutes before to ascertain that Ralph had not been killed? that some hope still remained? Now they knew upon unquestionable authority that, though wounded, he was believed to be out of danger; but there was a horrid doubt, and months might

elapse before that doubt could be cleared up. Mrs. Rutherford felt her ancient sorrows renewed, and Julia, the warm-hearted, sanguine Julia, the spoiled child of fortune, how was she to meet a blow like this?

Laura had ordered the carriage as soon as her father had galloped off. Between joy, that Ralph had not been killed, and alarm at the thought of his being wounded, her mind was bewildered.

“Oh, that Shuldham were here!” she said. “My poor Julia would listen to him; but now he is gone, we have no one to advise us.”

Doctor Seacombe now came in, and having heard the report, he proposed to go to the cottage with Laura.

“I shall not appear, Miss Laura,” he said, “unless you should require my assistance.”

Laura found Mrs. Rutherford in a fainting-

fit: she had endeavoured to suppress her feelings, but nature could bear no more.

Julia, pale as death, was wringing her hands in an agony of grief, and lamenting Mrs. Rutherford, whom she believed to be dead.

Doctor Seacombe was called in, and assured Julia that there was nothing to be feared for Mrs. Rutherford; and Lady Evandale, who had now arrived, insisted upon Julia's leaving the room.

Such was the state of affairs at the cottage when a messenger was announced with letters. Mrs. Rutherford, under the judicious care of Doctor Seacombe, had revived, and, ashamed of her weakness, mustered all her courage to appear composed.

Mr. Carteret tapped at the door.

"I have letters," he said, "for Mrs. Rutherford. Our young friend may be expected forthwith, for the messenger left him

yesterday off Plymouth, and reports most favourably of him.”

The anxious mother caught her son's name, and heard indistinctly Mr. Carteret's last words.

“For mercy's sake!” she cried, “keep nothing from me! I am prepared for the worst, though, if my ears did not deceive me, there must be good news.”

There was no need for hesitation now. Mr. Carteret told her that the messenger had only left Ralph yesterday, and that he was on his way home. She clasped his letter to her lips: it was a sad scrawl, but it was Ralph's own handwriting.

“My dearest Mother,

“My friend, Lord George Carleton, who has nursed me like a brother, will land me as near to you as he can. His surgeon will travel with me. I am very feeble, but I am

on my road to that dear cottage, which my heart tells me contains my Julia and my mother. Once there, I trust, by God's blessing, and the care of those dear ones, I shall soon be well. They tell me I must write no more.

“RALPH RUTHERFORD.”

Julia had heard the joyful intelligence : she rushed in, and, with glistening eyes, devoured the letter. Here was joy and sorrow, hope and fear ! but he was coming. She should see him. Mrs. Rutherford and Julia embraced in silent happiness.

But Lady Evandale, though deeply moved at this scene, felt that it was her duty to interrupt it.

“Julia, my love,” she said, “our gallant friend, Ralph, is probably not far behind his messenger, who had a long land journey to

make; so we must be prepared. You had better remove to my house; Mrs. Rutherford will have many arrangements to make at the little cottage for the accommodation of our dear invalid; and Dr. Seacombe, you also must come down to the Lodge, that you may be near your patient. We must be ready to receive him, and poor, dear Amelia has much to think of. It will abridge the painful delay, and beguile the time, to occupy herself with the necessary changes.”

Julia looked almost reproachfully at her aunt (for so they were wont to call Lady Evandale, though the connection was really more remote) but she felt the propriety, the necessity of her removal, and that it should be instantaneous, and was thankful it was only to the Lodge.

“Thanks, my dear aunt,” she said, “for I am not equal to joining my family, and as I

must leave our dear friend, I shall at least be near her, and have Dr. Seacombe near me too."

Mrs. Rutherford was now fully alive to the necessity for preparation. It was hard to be separated from Julia at such a moment, but there was no remedy, and the occupation of arranging everything for her wounded, helpless boy was a great relief to her overwrought feelings.

Mrs. Rutherford and Julia were left to themselves, and Julia gave vent to her lamentations. Her friend could only soothe her by assurances of future happiness, in which it was painfully obvious to Julia, that she herself had little confidence, and both became silent.

Dr. Seacombe had returned with Laura, and lost no time in transferring himself to the Lodge, a measure which greatly pleased them all.

The dinner-hour came at Trevor House,

for, however great our anxiety or sincere our grief may be, nothing interrupts the form, at least, of our domestic arrangements. But it was no longer a gay and social party. Laura never found her sister's place so irksome to her ; she did not at any time like the head of the table, but now it distressed her. She thought of Ralph's wounds and Julia's grief, and concluded by wishing that Shuldham could be with them, for he had always found remedies for every trouble. Mr. Carteret was silent and abstracted : he did not like to have his domestic comforts disturbed.

“Poor Seacombe,” said Uncle Peter, “he might as well have stopt dinner, and that salmon would not have gone out untouched.”

“What's that?” said Mr. Carteret, as a servant rode up the avenue : a note was brought in from Seacombe.

“Ralph Rutherford has arrived,” it said,
“and has borne his journey well. I will tell
you more when I have had a conference with
Mr. Strong.”

CHAPTER IX

Mr. Carteret ordered his horse, and rode down to the cottage. Dr. Seacombe came out to him.

“ We are doing extremely well,” he said. “ The patient is weak and exhausted with his journey, but he insisted so positively on being placed on the sofa in the sitting room, that we have given way, and he is now asleep there. In all else he is perfectly docile, and his poor mother sits watching him with the tears running down her face, in such a

strange mixture of joy and grief as I never beheld."

"But what says Mr. Strong?"

"Another operation will be necessary, a difficult, perhaps, a dangerous operation, but we can have the most distinguished operators, for he must have some days' rest after his fatigues. I shall be in constant attendance, but we have not finished our consultation, and Strong cannot wait."

"Surely as he sleeps, Seacombe, I might be permitted to see him, not as you may well suppose to gratify an idle curiosity, but I must go home by the Lodge, and to say that I had seen him sleeping, would more than anything soothe and calm my poor girl."

"Remain perfectly silent, and I think I may venture it. Mrs. Rutherford is wholly absorbed in her own feelings, and her eyes never stray from the object of her love."

He opened the door gently, Carteret followed, and stood rivetted to the spot, looking alternately at the mother and the son. Ralph's face was deadly pale, but he slept soundly, and but for occasional twitches of the muscles of the face, peacefully.

The mother watched his deep breathing, and for a moment her lips moved in heartfelt thanksgiving that she was permitted to nurse and tend him, and so clearly did the expression of that ingenuous countenance speak her thoughts, that Mr. Carteret and Seacombe exchanged a glance of admiration, almost of awe. At length Carteret withdrew, and proceeded to the Lodge. It had been settled between him and Seacombe, that the news of Ralph's arrival should if possible be withheld from the Lodge till Carteret could himself be the bearer of the intelligence.

He was announced, and Julia, startled by

a visit from her father at so unusual an hour flew to meet him.

“He has come! he has come!” she said.

“Oh, let me but see him!”

“He has come, my dear,” replied Mr. Carteret, “but he is fatigued and sleeps. I have seen him sleeping, and his mother sitting by him.”

“And why may not I sit by him! am I not his wife in the sight of Heaven?”

“Not yet my love,” interposed Lady Evandale, “and it cannot be. How could you enter his chamber?”

“He is not in his chamber,” said Mr. Carteret. “He resisted all entreaties to go there. He sleeps upon the sofa in the sitting room.”

“There spoke my noble Ralph!” exclaimed Julia. “He felt that I should die, if I did not see him; he feared the trammels of etiquette, and feeble as he was, he resisted

even his mother's entreaties, more forcible with him than aught on earth, save one generous feeling." She threw herself at her father's feet. "I know, I feel," she said, "why he refused to go to his chamber. O my father! when he wakes, he will expect to see me: let him not be disappointed; 'twould break my heart not to seek him."

Mr. Carteret raised her up, and placed her gently on the sofa. He looked appealingly to Lady Evandale, who was extremely perplexed. Her ideas of propriety were rigid: they had been hardened by a long course of calm, unbroken regularity, and scrupulous attention to her maternal duties, but she felt for Julia, and loved her.

"Be composed my darling," said Mr. Carteret. "I will write to Seacombe. You shall know when Ralph awakes, and you shall see him. In the meantime, I must write to your Uncle and Laura, who are

impatiently waiting for news from me. I will desire my brother to send the carriage here at once ; only promise to rest and be calm, till the summons shall arrive. It may be, ought to be, some hours, but remember Julia, my love, you must command your feelings. Agitation is most dangerous to him."

Julia was only too well persuaded of this. She endeavoured to compose herself, and at length the summons from the cottage came. Ralph had awakened much restored, and Mrs. Rutherford was anxious for the arrival of Julia.

They met in the presence of his mother. Seacombe had stipulated that Ralph should not speak, and that Julia should exercise complete self-control. It was sufficient for her to know that excitement of any kind was injurious to Ralph. Seacombe had only consented to the interview as a

lesser evil than the disappointment would be, and he had judged well.

Julia held Ralph's fevered hand in silence, but her countenance was eloquent, and Ralph feeling that he was in that dear cottage with Julia and his mother was calmed and soothed. The fever abated, the pulse assumed a more healthy action, and after a half hour of intense gratification, he sank into calm repose, such as he had not known since the fatal shot had struck him.

Doctor Seacombe now resumed his authority. He assured the weeping girl that his patient was much more composed than he had dared to hope for, and that he could safely promise, that she should see him on the morrow—that he himself should sleep at the cottage, and she might depend upon his care, and should hear from him in the morning. "Let this assurance," he said, "induce you to seek repose, lest your

harrassed and careworn appearance should alarm or distress him to-morrow. We have much to be thankful for."

He had explained meantime to Mr. Carteret the particulars of his conference with Mr. Strong.

Julia and Mrs. Rutherford took an affectionate leave of each other. Neither of them yet knew how dangerous the approaching operation might prove, nor was it desirable at present that they should do so. Mr. Carteret directed Seacombe, that no expense should be spared, but the first operators from town should be engaged. It was of the highest importance that Ralph should not only be kept quiet, but that his mind should also be as free as possible from anxiety, and it was decided that Julia should be as much with him as possible. Mr. Carteret accordingly left Julia at the Lodge much tranquillized by having seen Ralph, and

by Doctor Seacombe's promise that she should see him in the morning. She gave a flattering description of the invalid to her aunt and to Edith, and for the first time since the agonising report had reached her, she slept well and rose refreshed. Next morning a message from Seacombe announced that Ralph had passed a very satisfactory night, and would hope to see her at noon.

Thus several days passed, Ralph suffered much pain occasionally, with some fever, but Julia's presence never failed to calm him. On the fifth, day Lord George Carleton arrived at Trevor House. Mr. V— the celebrated anatomist from Haslar, had promised to attend, and being asked which of the great London operators he would propose, named A— C—.

Both these gentlemen had seen Mr. Strong's report of the case, and that of Mr. Griffiths, the surgeon of the 'Boadicea.'

It would appear that some substance, most probably a piece of his cloth jacket, must have entered the wound with the ball, and not having been discovered, a false healing had taken place, and the feeble state of the patient had debarred Mr. Griffiths from trying to extract it on board the ship, under so many disadvantages.

Doctor Seacombe was directed to make daily reports to the operating surgeons, that they might determine when to operate, and in the mean time every precaution was to be taken to improve the health, and keep up the spirits of the patient.

Ralph knew what awaited him. He was resigned to the result, be it what it might, whilst the presence of Julia and his mother kept his mind in a continued state of dreamy enjoyment. No other member of the family attempted to see him.

Lord George was advised not to pay

him a visit, but was cordially invited to return to Trevor House as soon as Ralph should be convalescent. He passed a day at the Lodge, where he had an interview with Mrs. Rutherford, and was much pleased with Edith Evandale, with whom and Laura he walked within the grounds of the Lodge, making himself very agreeable. He spoke of Ralph as a very dear friend, and of Shuldham with much esteem.

At length the day fixed for the operation drew nigh, and it became necessary to be more communicative to Mrs. Rutherford. She was told that the operation would not be without danger, and whilst she trembled to hear this, and awaited the arrival of the distinguished surgeons, her agitation could not be concealed from Julia, who perfectly content with seeing Ralph daily, grew frantic at the prospect of exclusion under such sad circumstances.

“Am I not his wife, in the sight of God?” she said. “Permit me, I beseech you, to share your toils and cares. Who but his betrothed can watch by his pillow with you, my mother?”

Mrs. Rutherford was deeply moved. She feared too, and not without reason, that to remove Julia would agitate her son fearfully, a thing to be carefully avoided. Julia flew to her father. “Let me not be torn from him now,” she said, “when his life is at stake.”

Mr. Carteret could not restrain his tears, and Uncle Peter tried in vain to calm his favorite. They told her it was not possible that she could attend him, it could not be.

“Then,” she cried, starting up, “can I not marry him? Yes, can I not marry him at once? and then I shall be his nurse! I know from all the precautions that have been taken, from the names of the eminent

men who have been called in, that Ralph's life is in danger, in imminent danger; I see dear Mrs. Rutherford in an agony of terror. Oh, my father, dear Uncle! have pity upon me. Ralph will feel that I have withdrawn, have abandoned him upon a point of form, and think you that he will not be agitated by my abandonment of him. You will destroy him and I shall never survive him."

Mr. Carteret and his brother were equally distressed by the picture which she had so forcibly drawn.

"I will see what can be done, my love," said Mr. Carteret. "We will consult Lady Evandale."

"I," said Uncle Peter, quite subdued, "I can see no impossibility in this matter. They were betrothed with our full consent, and nothing is wanting to their union but a mere ceremony. They are husband and wife in the eyes of God; and Julia is right to claim

the privilege of nursing her husband, I honour her for it. Get a licence, perform the ceremony, and I will give her twenty thousand pounds as a marriage portion."

Julia threw her arms round Uncle Peter's neck.

"My own kind, dear Uncle," she said, in a voice broken with emotion.

Laura too embraced Uncle Peter. She had been a silent, but deeply interested witness of the whole scene, and now retired with Julia, who had been quite exhausted by the violence of her emotions. After an hour's repose, she was sufficiently recovered to write to Mrs. Rutherford.

"My mother.

"A fearful operation awaits our beloved Ralph. I saw it in your despair, and they do not deny it. Shall I, at such a moment,

be torn from you, and from him? There is madness in the thought. Can we not at once be married? then shall I be entitled as his wife, and your daughter, to join with you in the sacred task imposed upon us. By God's blessing, we may be instrumental in saving him; but should we lose him, I should have nothing to live for but you. That we had together performed the last painful duties to a husband and a son, would form a bond of union between us which could alone make life endurable. Oh my mother! prepare him for it. He would ill brook my desertion of him at such a crisis, yet the world demands it, and thus only can we escape its stern dictates. I shall be his wife, and may claim the privilege of watching over him with his adored mother.

“ JULIA.”

This letter was sent, and Julia, more composed, retired to rest.

Meantime, a very different letter had reached the cottage, addressed to Ralph.

“ My dear Sir,

“ Having heard from John Brady, that you have returned to England badly wounded, I have been in a most painful state of anxiety about you, and having been summoned to London about a will of a distant relation, which has given me three hundred and seventy-two pounds, the first use I make of my wealth shall be to go down to Bewdley, in the hope to see you, and to find you recovering. I always thought God’s blessing was upon you, and I think so still. Do not give yourself any thought about lodging me, the humblest village inn will suffice me, but I could not deny myself the pleasure of seeing you, which I could now so well afford. Poor

Amy is quite disconsolate, and Brady makes a perfect hero of you in his report.

“THOMAS BROOKS.”

This letter was sent to Mr. Carteret, with a request that he would receive its worthy and reverend writer, for whom Ralph entertained a high regard.

Mrs. Rutherford was enchanted with Julia's letter. “Ralph,” she replied, “kissed it reverentially. ‘Tell my noble minded, my generous Julia,’ he said, ‘that I should be utterly unworthy of her were I to permit such a sacrifice. I feel bitterly that the world will enforce its claim, and that I must learn to suffer without the solace of her presence. A thousand blessings on my Julia!’ Ralph has been so much agitated,” continued Mrs. Rutherford, “at the thought of your being no longer permitted to visit him, that Dr. Seacombe has postponed the

operation. He is much more calm since he learned your generous purpose. 'I am proud of my Julia,' he frequently murmurs. As the operation is postponed, you are not yet forbidden to come, and I long to tell you how inexpressibly dear you are to me. Your presence during my trials would be a great alleviation; still I say with my noble boy, that you must not thus sacrifice yourself. Lady Evandale is right; for I have confided your generous wish to her."

Dr. Seacombe saw his hopes defeated, and he told Mr. Carteret, that Julia's absence would be the death of his patient. Uncle Peter insisted upon a licence, and Lady Evandale after a long interview with Seacombe, gave up her opposition. Ralph's objections, though natural and honourable, were not invincible, and it was agreed that the marriage should take place, and that Mr.

Brooks, who was hourly expected, should marry them.

This important point settled, Ralph became more composed. Julia and her mother, (as she now called her), were full of hope, and if they sometimes trembled for the result, it was in secret.

A hired chaise drove up to the cottage door, and Mrs. Rutherford was now equal to receiving Mr. Brooks for a moment, to explain to him that Ralph was not able to see him at present, as they were obliged to avoid anything sudden with him, but that he hoped to be able to see his friend next morning, and that he had been much gratified by his letter.

She then directed the good old man to Trevor House, where she assured him a most kind welcome awaited him, and that Mr. Carteret would bring him over to Bewdley in

the morning. She made her excuses as being in immediate attendance on her son, and took a kind leave.

The postilion, who well knew Trevor House, proceeded thither, but Mr. Brooks was lost in grief and anxiety, and when they pulled up at the door, he scarcely remembered the name of his host. Mr. Carteret and Laura were returning from a stroll in the grounds, when they saw the chaise drive up, and in the nervous, agitated state in which they all were, hastened to see what it could mean.

“Surely,” said Laura to herself, “it is Shulldham. He has heard of poor Ralph’s state, and has posted off to see him—so like Shulldham !”

But the person who had now alighted from the chaise was certainly not like Shulldham. Who could he be? A grey-haired man of clerical department and most

engaging appearance. Her father had hastened to receive him with the greatest cordiality, and the more so, that at that very moment it had occurred to him, that he had quite forgotten to mention Mrs. Rutherford's note to Laura, or to any one else. The note was lying buried in his great coat-pocket, for the question of the marriage had taken up all his thoughts, and everything else had been neglected. Most fortunately he was on the spot to remedy the evil, which he did with such cordiality, that his guest was highly gratified.

“My daughter, Mr. Brooks,” he said, as Laura had now approached; “Laura, my dear, will you give orders about Mr. Brooks's room? It is a melancholy affair this, Mr. Brooks, but we will hope for the best, and we are most happy to make your acquaintance. Will you walk in and take some refreshment after your journey?”

“ My journey, my dear Sir, has only been from Lymington, where I arrived last night. I am not accustomed to a close chaise, and if it is agreeable to you, I would rather remain in the open air.”

Mr. Carteret now stated fully to his guest Ralph's situation, and the operation hanging over him ; Mr. Brooks listened with intense interest.

“ My acquaintance with this youth, Mr. Carteret,” he replied, at length, “ was made under circumstances bordering on the marvellous. He was thrown upon the bleak and dangerous coast on which I live by an awful storm, in which, by his courage and sagacity, under God, he was the instrument of safety to a whole ship's crew. His garments were soiled and torn ; he had undergone cheerfully, as the sailors told me, hardships and fatigues beyond belief ; yet was he, though of commanding presence, gentle and unassuming,

nor did the state of his habiliments detract from his appearance. I was struck by the natural dignity of a superior mind, which seemed, as it were, to clothe him with authority. He was penniless, and cared not for it, but there is One above who cares for those who trust in Him. The shipwrecked stranger brought us good news of one long lamented as lost, and the manner in which he administered consolation to the afflicted parent, made my heart yearn towards him. I invited him to my humble home, and as we communed by the way, I found in him a cheerful simplicity of conversation which charmed me. He was indeed a youth of high promise, and I cherished the recollection of him in my heart warmly. God's blessing will be with this youth, I said, and I still say so. His trials are great, but he is endowed with strength to endure them. I heard from a humble friend, whom he had rescued from

undeserved misery, that he had been wounded, and was here. Fortune, for the first time in my life, enabled me to meet the expense of travel. I longed to see him, and to pray with him as I have often done for him; and thus it is, Mr. Carteret, that I am thrown upon your hospitality and kindness. Mrs. Rutherford assures me that you will carry me to-morrow to the cottage, and that I shall see my young friend."

"Most welcome are you here, my dear Sir, and we will see our suffering friend to-morrow. My eldest daughter, who is Ralph's affianced wife, has gone down to the cottage, and will bring us the latest news of him. My younger daughter you have seen, and here comes in good time, though somewhat retarded by gout, my brother, known in this family, Mr. Brooks, as Uncle Peter. You will find him a man

after your own heart. Slight introduction will you need to each other. Peter, this is Ralph's venerable friend, Mr. Brookes. You see you are well known to us, Sir: you are no stranger here, but a valued friend. I must leave you for the present, but surely you had better go into the house. You must need refreshment."

But Mr. Brooks preferred to chat in the open air with Uncle Peter, whose countenance pleased him much, until recollecting that his friend's gout might make walking inconvenient to him, he expressed a wish to return to the house.

Mr. Brooks and Uncle Peter were made for each other. They slid into confidence and friendship with a rapidity and facility unknown, and perhaps incomprehensible, to worldly men. All the peculiarities and anxieties of their situation were fully ex-

plained by Uncle Peter, save only the question of immediate marriage, which delicacy forbade whilst a doubt remained.

Mr. Brooks was shown to his apartment, and glad he was to commune with his own heart in solitude. The events of the day were to one of his quiet and retired habits strangely exciting. He was delighted with the Carterets, and especially with Uncle Peter, who had so justly been denominated by Mr. Carteret as the man after his own heart. London had fatigued, worried, and disgusted him: for he had been overwhelmed by the noise and bustle of a crowded city, and now the calm quietude of the country was delicious to him. And what a country? how different to Seaham-cum-Lapwater, and that dreary district, where the worthy man had for so many years toiled in virtuous obscurity. His naturally pure taste was gratified by all around him, and when seated

at the hospitable board of his new friends, he felt all the more at his ease, that the same anxious feeling which filled his own bosom clearly pervaded the whole party.

The conversation turned chiefly upon Ralph. Mr. Brooks enlarged upon his generous efforts to rescue Jack Brady, and they listened with deep interest to the tale, as it had been narrated to his family by that grateful seaman. Nor was the eulogium of the Captain of the 'Eliza' and 'Anne,' less grateful to them, in the simple language of the warm-hearted Mr. Brooks. Uncle Peter drank in these narratives with peculiar delight; for this as he proudly thought, was the husband he had given to his darling Julia.

As the evening advanced, a carriage drove up, and Julia herself entered the room, radiant with joyful hope, for Ralph was much better.

She flew to Mr. Brooks as to an old and dear friend. Was he not the friend of Ralph, and sent as it were at this auspicious moment to unite them for ever? She assured him that Ralph had been much gratified at this proof of his regard, and would expect him in the morning, and all this so graciously, so bewitchingly, that Mr. Brooks was enchanted.

Thus closed this eventful day, and Mr. Brooks was requested to officiate in family prayer, which he did with a zeal and simplicity of devotion which was truly edifying, and when he named their suffering friend, and besought mercy for him, Julia was by no means the only person present whose tears vouched for the earnestness of their appeal to the throne of grace.

CHAPTER X.

AT noon on the following day Mr. Carteret arrived at the cottage with Mr. Brooks. Ralph had passed the night favourably, and Doctor Seacombe having conducted Mr. Brooks to his patient's couch—for Ralph had still remained in the parlour, left them for a short private conference. What passed was not exactly known, but at the expiration of ten minutes, Mr. Brooks returned to Mrs. Rutherford's apartment much agitated. His tears flowed fast.

“It shall be so,” he said, “I will perform the sacred office. May Heaven bless them.”

Julia advanced and took the old man’s hand.

“Bless you, my child,” he said. “You are acting a noble and a generous part, and to-morrow shall see you the wife of our beloved friend. The sight of that countenance will soothe and calm his fevered frame, and rich will be your reward. Ralph Rutherford is worthy of you.”

The following day (the licence having arrived) Ralph was married to Julia by Mr. Brooks in presence of Lady Evandale, his mother, Mr. Carteret and Uncle Peter. It was a solemn scene. Tears usurped the place of smiles, and Ralph was left to his repose. His mind was relieved; he felt the devoted attachment of Julia; and he was no longer to be denied the gratifi-

cation of seeing her. She was entitled to share the cares and anxieties of Mrs. Rutherford. His courage was fully equal to the trial, and he begged Doctor Seacombe to fix an early day for the operation. The Doctor had now no hesitation in doing so ; and he wrote to that effect to the two great practitioners, who arranged to meet at the cottage on the following Tuesday. It was now Friday ; and Mr. Brooks, whose duty required his presence at home, took an affectionate leave of his new friends.

Julia begged him to wear a plain, but handsome ring for her sake.

“ Pray for us, my excellent friend,” she said. “ Oh ! think of us in our hour of trial. I was bold whilst the fear of being torn from him threatened me, but now I look forward with terror. My heart sinks within me.”

“ My child,” said the old man, whilst

his tears flowed fast, "God is gracious. Whom He loveth He chasteneth. We all need His chastisements, and such trials purify the heart. They are sent in mercy, not in wrath. Pray fervently, and trust implicitly. You have now important duties to perform, and you are entitled to execute them. No stranger hand will now grudgingly perform duties which to the wife and mother are sacred. Humanly speaking, this precious life is in your hands. Gird yourself to the task, my dear child, and my earnest prayers shall be with you."

He laid his hand on her head, which bowed reverentially. There was a simple eloquence, a holy earnestness of manner, in her venerable friend, which touched her to the heart.

When he was gone, Julia flung herself into the arms of her mother and sobbed

bitterly for a moment: both gave way to grief, though it was only for an instant.

“A good man’s prayer availeth much,” said Mrs. Rutherford, as she kissed Julia’s forehead.

But Ralph had awakened, and his young wife hastened to assume her duties. Julia’s presence was sunshine to his soul.

“My own!” he said faintly.—But he was not to talk, and her hand playfully stopped his mouth. These were delicious hours, and Ralph gained strength daily; and only that the fatal Tuesday hung upon their spirits, Julia would have been happy.

It came at last, that dreadful day. Ralph had been removed up stairs. Doctor Seacombe received the great surgeons, who had been minutely informed respecting the case, and the patient was prepared to submit to the operation with fortitude. Something,

most probably a piece of woollen cloth, had been carried in with the ball; and the irritation produced by it was so great, that the wound must be re-opened, and the substance extracted, at whatever risk; for although the patient rallied, and had intervals of ease, during which he recovered his strength to a certain degree, it was obvious that these intervals became shorter, and his subsequent sufferings greater, and that at each interval the amount of strength which he attained was less than on the preceding occasion.

Mr. Carteret who came to offer his house to the surgeons after the operation, was much struck with their firm, manly appearance. They seemed to approach their dreadful task with confidence, and assured him that they felt no doubt as to the result of the operation. The danger was, lest from its having been so long delayed, his consti-

tution should have been undermined, and that he might sink from exhaustion. His youth, and his strong frame, hardened by a previously active life, were much in his favour.

Poor Mr. Carteret was left to draw what comfort he might from these sources. He threw himself upon the couch, where Ralph had laid so long, lest he should be deprived of the sight of Julia ; but soon he started up. Soft footsteps overhead reminded him that the surgeons were there ; and engaged in a task the result of which was life or death to Ralph, and, as his heart whispered, to Julia also—for he felt that, if it ended fatally for Ralph, a cruel lingering death would prey upon her youth and beauty. The thought was insupportable !

He was faint, and hurried into the open air, where the first object that met his eyes was his brother. Poor Uncle Peter could

endure his suspense no longer. He had come down to the village, and was wandering restlessly about the house, to catch perhaps the cry of agony from the sufferer, or of despair from his darling Julia. It was a melancholy greeting between the brothers, and neither had any consolation to offer.

And what was going on in the chamber to which Julia and Mrs. Rutherford had retired—the wife and mother? Prayers and tears, hopes and apprehensions, which baffle description and over which we must draw a veil.

When such men as Cooper and Vance proceed, with a clear knowledge of the case, to perform an operation, however difficult and dangerous, it is rarely tedious. The irritating substance proved to be what had been suspected; and Ralph bore his sufferings manfully. Well he knew what ears were listening, and well he knew what gentle

tendance would return to watch over his exhausted energies.

The task was successfully performed, and composing medicine administered. The great men withdrew with Mr. Carteret, for their time was precious; and Doctor Seacombe having finished his dressings, announced to the weeping, trembling wife and mother, that his patient slept, but that they might take charge of him in alternate watch.

“Everything,” he said, “has been so skilfully performed, that care and attention are all that is now requisite; but his amendment must at best be slow and tedious. You must not therefore exhaust your strength, but relieve each other. I shall sleep in the cottage, that you may have no unnecessary alarm. He must not be disturbed by any one.”

Julia claimed the privilege of watching her husband, whilst Mrs. Rutherford prepared

what Seacombe had ordered, and then sought rest—at first vainly, but prayer brought composure, and she slept.

Ralph awoke somewhat refreshed, but deplorably feeble. He was thirsty, and the prescribed remedy administered by the hand of Julia was doubly grateful. For several days there was much pain and little amendment, and Doctor Seacombe was evidently uneasy, though he strove to appear confident. Day succeeded day, but no moment passed in which one or other of his vigilant nurses was not at his side. At length, the feverish symptoms evidently abated: Ralph began to look more like his former self, and cheered those fond and faithful hearts with smiles of love and gratitude. The battle had been fought and won, the sufferer had trembled on the verge of the grave; but he was once more able to look on that pale face, never before so beautiful in his eyes, and

could once more listen to the music of that sweet voice, and then turn to his weeping mother with an expression of unutterable affection. They were not tears of sorrow which Mrs. Rutherford now shed. His amendment was visible, but he was still dreadfully weak. He would have spoken, but again Julia's hand prevented the dangerous effort, even at the risk of imprisonment.

Doctor Seacombe entered the chamber. He shook his head.

“Be prudent,” he said. “Leave him for awhile to his own thoughts. We have nothing to fear now but too much exertion, too much excitement.”

All felt the justice of the Doctor's decree, and submitted to it; indeed Julia and Mrs. Rutherford required repose almost as much as Ralph.

From this time forward his recovery was steady, though not rapid. Time was neces-

sary to restore strength to a frame so debilitated, but he could soon enjoy the society of those he loved so well. There is something enjoyable even in helplessness, when a beloved hand ministers to it. Alas, what a sorry estimate of life do the cold and heartless make, when they renounce the domestic affections for some sordid, selfish end, but truly they have their reward. Mrs Rutherford and Julia had theirs, when with hearts overflowing with love and gratitude, they bent their pale faces before the God of mercy; for mercifully He had dealt with them.

Ralph was soon able to support a conversation, and gradually to see his friends for a short time, and now he gained strength fast, and Julia's looks kept pace with Ralph's amendment, whilst Mrs. Rutherford rejoiced over them both.

Uncle Peter's princely gift to Julia was now first mentioned to Mrs. Rutherford, who had felt some misgiving about their future welfare. It was agreed that nothing should yet be said to Ralph upon the subject. Ralph was becoming very anxious about them, and now insisted that his mother and Julia should take the air; and the faithful Jemima, who had never quitted Julia, was admitted to Ralph's room, and installed as his nurse. She was not a little proud of her office, and Ralph encouraged her to talk, for the affectionate old woman had but one subject, and that was fortunately a subject of which Ralph never tired.

His friends came as Doctor Seacombe permitted, and Uncle Peter was so quiet that he was indulged with long visits. He undertook to write to Mr. Brooks, with whom he had contracted a warm friendship,

but soon these restrictions and precautions became unnecessary, and Ralph was convalescent.

“I think, Doctor Seacombe, that Ralph might take an airing in the carriage to-morrow?” said Julia.

“And so he shall,” said the Doctor, “if you will go with him to take care of him. But what have we here?”

An official letter, with a formidable seal, had been brought. It was addressed on H. M. Service to Lieutenant Rutherford, R.N. Ralph coloured a little as he broke the seal, and Julia became alarmed. She feared she knew not what.

“You have nothing to dread, my love,” said Ralph: “it is an announcement of my promotion, a very gratifying and important thing, which does not at present call me away.”

Mr. Carteret coming in, was delighted to

hear that Ralph had been promoted, but Julia almost owed the letter a grudge. She seemed to think it but an ill-omened epistle; pregnant of wounds and horrors.

A letter received the following day somewhat reconciled her to it. Bromhead wrote as follows :

“ My dear Rutherford,

“ I was sorry to hear you had been suffering severely, and I have no doubt you have borne your lot better than I have mine. I am glad to find you are promoted, for you richly deserved it. Merivale, who is an honourable man, though somewhat straight-laced and formal, more in your way than in mine, wrote a letter to the Admiralty which had somewhat perplexed them, and bids fair to keep me out of my promotion ; still his statement is quite true. I did land without orders—I ought, perhaps, to say contrary to

his orders, but the temptation was irresistible, and I have paid dearly for it, for I am still on my beam-ends. I often think of you, I cannot be like you if I would ; but when you pointed out, in such forcible terms, the impious folly of oaths and execrations, you made more impression on me than you supposed, or than I chose at the time to admit. I have suffered enough since that, but no oath has escaped from my lips, but I am afraid I was more struck with the folly than with the guilt of swearing. Be that as it may, I have now given it up. Accept my congratulations. Write and tell me how you are getting on.

“ Your old friend,

“ GEOFFREY BROMHEAD.

“ P.S. Birchall is promoted too. It is a great shame to leave me out, and the thought worries me.”

Ralph was at length well enough to descend to the parlour. It is a luxury to quit, for the first time, the chamber of sickness and suffering which those only who have suffered can conceive, and Julia joyfully congratulated him as she supported him in his transition from the one room to the other.

“’Tis true, my love, that I enjoy it,” he replied, “and am deeply grateful for it, but that sick chamber, Julia, will always be precious in my sight. There are precious recollections connected with it. Often, when so weak and exhausted, that it was doubtful to you whether I comprehended what was going on around me, I was, in reality, more than ever sensitive. My perceptions were even painfully acute, and I felt the ceaseless care of ministering angels round me. I thought how different would have been my situation on board ship, or even in an

hospital ; and these reflections made me feel grateful and happy. I was in pain, love, but my mind and my heart were at ease. Come, come," he added, "dry up your tears, I did not mean to distress you. Here comes Uncle Peter. I must have seemed an ungracious varlet in his eyes, but it shall be so no longer."

Julia rose to meet her uncle, and saluted him affectionately.

"I am delighted to see Ralph here," he said. "We shall soon see him at Trevor House now. But I came to show you a letter from Mr. Brooks. The worthy man loves you both dearly."

"Thanks, my dear Sir," said Ralph, "and it is a source of great pleasure to me that I have been the means of bringing Mr. Brooks and you together. But I have a long account to settle with you. Surely you must have thought me most ungrateful to have made

no acknowledgment to you for your princely generosity to Julia. I fear you must have attributed it to false pride, and perhaps there was a time when I should have shrunk from owing my fortune to you, or even to Julia herself, but these overwrought feelings no longer have force in my mind. I have suffered enough, and committed follies enough, under the influence of false pride. I was a slave to it; but, like everything else that is false, I renounce and abhor it. I will admit to you frankly, my dear Sir, that I had felt some uneasiness about providing for Julia. I have seen enough of this rough work-a-day world to know that I could not support her in her proper sphere; and I am grateful, most grateful to you, for having so nobly set my mind at rest upon so important a point. If I had been sooner told of your generosity, I should have made my acknowledgment earlier."

Uncle Peter took Ralph's hand affectionately.

“ I had long since avowed,” he said, “ that Julia was to be my heir. I encouraged the dear girl’s inclination for you, because I thought you worthy of her. I think so still, and, barring legacies, my whole fortune is settled upon her. The sum I have given I judged necessary to your present comfort ; hereafter I will explain my affairs more fully to you. God bless you both !”

The Evandales and Laura at this moment came in, and turned the conversation.

“ I was thinking,” said Rutherford, addressing Lady Evandale, “ that these girls have had a dull time of it lately on my account ; and now that I feel equal to it, I should like to give them an excursion to Iverport. It is not more than twelve miles off ; the cliffs and strand are beautiful, and there is a neat country inn, where we could all rest. I have just received a note

from Lord George Carleton, who will be at Trevor House to-morrow, and will enliven our party much.”

The girls were delighted, and Lady Evandale made no objection. It was Tuesday, and the party was fixed for Thursday. Contrary to custom upon such occasions in this country, Thursday morning came forth in great beauty, and the party having collected at the Lodge, set off in high spirits, some of them on horseback, the rest in carriages, and after a delightful ride, especially to the party on horseback, they arrived at the ‘Jolly Pilot,’ where by Ralph’s management they found refreshments prepared for them, and by Uncle Peter’s contrivance an agreeable surprise for Laura. He had received a letter from Shulldham, announcing his arrival at Portsmouth as prizemaster of a privateer, adding that he hoped to be at Trevor House on Thursday

forenoon. This Uncle Peter had carefully concealed, but he wrote to Shuldham to meet them at the inn at Iwerport, giving him the programme of the party. Ralph and Julia were privy to the plot, and when the carriage drove up, Shuldham made his appearance to hand out the ladies. Laura thought she must be dreaming, but it was really Shuldham, who received a most kindly welcome from all the party. He was delighted to see Ralph so recovered, but very soon attached himself to Laura, who was not a good hand at climbing; and they sallied forth to stroll amongst the cliffs, which offered a great variety of beautiful scenery, whilst ships passing up and down the channel were manœuvring as if for their special amusement.

Cliff rambling is under favourable circumstances a very delightful occupation, but it separates parties into groups and couples

sadly. Lord George devoted himself to the Evandales, and assisted them in all their little difficulties, which were not of infrequent occurrence. Shuldham took especial charge of Laura, who evidently felt herself quite safe under his care. Ralph assisted his Julia, and perfectly happy themselves, they smiled to see their friends equally so. Mr. Carteret and Uncle Peter, with Mrs. Rutherford, were content to tread the smooth hard sand, exchanging greetings occasionally with their more adventurous friends, and rather wondering to see Lady Evandale, who was no great pedestrian, all at once so active and venturesome. Uncle Peter, who was fond of seeing vessels under way so that he was permitted to remain on shore, was much pleased with the manœuvring of a beautiful cutter, which, after making some short boards, fetched into the bay and anchored; and as they returned to the inn, they passed

a stout, red-faced good-humoured looking man who had just landed from her.

The few short hours they had passed at Iverport had put them all into excellent good humour when they assembled in the dining-room, and Uncle Peter called their attention to the trim craft lying in front of the windows.

The landlord entered with the first dish.

“What cutter is that? She is a cruizer, I am sure,” said Uncle Peter.

“It is the ‘Harpy,’ Sir. She is lately come round from the eastward to this station.”

“The ‘Harpy,’” said Ralph; “Captain Tandy?”

“Yes, Sir, Captain Tandy; he is now in the house.”

“Give my compliments—Captain Rutherford’s compliments—to him, and request the favour of his company to dinner.”

He explained to his friends who Captain Tandy was, and soon after the Captain entered. The name of Rutherford was familiar to him, and Ralph told him that he knew his son, and spoke handsomely of Tit's spirit. Lord George took Captain Tandy under his particular care, and hoped he had heard lately from his gallant son.

“ Yes, Sir, I have,” replied the Captain, “ and he mentions Captain Rutherford particularly.”

The dinner passed off gaily, every one took wine with Captain Tandy ; and Lord George having insinuated himself into the Captain's good graces, asked him if he had Tit's letter about him. The Captain readily produced it, and Carleton having perused it, observed that, as it was so very complimentary to their friend Captain Rutherford, and so clever a letter, he must ask permission to read it aloud. Captain Tandy was rather

modest about it, but his new friend easily obtained his consent. Rutherford and the rest of the party were too much occupied with each other to take any particular notice of this bye-play of Lord George, and Edith had been assured *sotto voce*, that it would be excellent fun, and would perplex Ralph not a little.

“Mr. Carteret,” said Carleton, “Captain Tandy is good enough to permit me to read his letter to the party; and as I am sure the ladies will be much gratified, I will venture to attempt it. You have great reason, Captain Tandy, to be proud of it.”

Captain Tandy smirked, and bowed, and Lord George began.

“I know, father, as you don’t like letters, and so I don’t often trouble you; but we have had a bit of a scrimmage, and I had my full share of it, and have suffered ac-

cordingly. We went on a cutting-out business. I was in our barge along with Birchall, who calls you his old friend, though you say you don't recollect him; but he is a good friend to me, though he do masthead me wrongfully sometimes. The grape-shot flew rather thick amongst the whole covey of boats; and when we got alongside, the tall fellows had it all their own way at first; but I got hold of a boarding-pike, and jobbed it into the Frenchmen's legs, through the boarding netting, pretty sharp, I tell you. But some of our fellows, who did not see what I was up to, but feeling me behind them, lashed out at me like mad, without ever looking.

“ ‘Monkey's allowancc, Tit, more kicks than halfpence,’ said Birchall, grinning, when he saw me catch it right in the jowl.

“He must have his joke, must Birchall; but he shouldn't so often go to Joe Miller for them. I 'spose he thinks we don't read.

We carried all four vessels ; Birchall towed three of them away, but the fourth would not move. I thought how it was, and looking over the taffrail, was 'ware of a sternfast to the shore, under water. I pointed this out to Bromhead, who was bellowing to the boats to give way : Thick-head, I think they ought to call him. He warn't over civil to me for the information ; but he's a brave fellow, and he swore a great oath that he would go on shore, and cut the sternfast himself ; and so he did, but the French soldiers was down upon him in no time.

“Rutherford, who is a great friend of mine, though he is a bit of a proud, crotchety fellow sometimes—but then you see, father, he knows how to choose his men—Rutherford flew to the shore to save Bromhead, and when I was getting into the boat with him to beat off the French, ‘Stop,’ he whispered

to me, 'between you and I, Tit, this is a wild-goose sort of an affair. I must have some one here that I can depend upon. You stay here, and if we should chance to get the worst of it, do you set the craft on fire, and swim to the nearest boat. I know your pluck, Tit.'

"Away they went, and left me alone. I was a reg'lar stand-up fight ashore, I tell you; the Frenchmen came galloping down in such numbers. I was dying to lend a-hand, and there was a swivel on the taffrail, with plenty of powder and shot. What should I see but the French General a leading on his men as bold as a lion. 'Here's at you, old Cock,' said I, for he was a crowing like. Bang I went at him with the swivel, just as he was a-waving 'em on, and knocked him right over, though Lanyard swears he was no general, only an officer, and that it was one of McDonald's

marines what shot him; but what does Lanyard know about it, the great six-foot lubber! he warn't there at all; it's all envy and malice. So I fired away all the shot I had; but seeing I could not keep up the fire, Rutherford and McDonald prepared to retreat. As soon as I saw them get into their boats, I felt it was time to be off; so I off with the hatches, sprinkled some loose powder amongst the hemp, and set fire to it. It blazed up sky-high quicker than I had expected; so I threw away my hat, kicked off my shoes, and overboard I went. Luckily for me, I hadn't time to pull off my jacket; but there's a great rend in it, and two shot-holes. The cutter picked me up, but hat, shoes, and jacket make a sad hole in my wardrobe, and I hope, father, you'll send me ten pounds to repair damages. So no more at present from your dutiful son,

“TIT TANDY.”

“ P.S. Your friend, Birchall—or rather my friend—is badly hurt ; but Doctor says he ’ont die. My friend Rutherford too, and that brave Russian. Bromhead, they think, must die. I’m sorry for him, though he warn’t civil to me, but I bear no malice, and Bromhead was always a brave fellow. Captain Merivale, Old Merry, as we call him in the berth, because he is always so grave, has been very civil to me, in his stiff way, and I know he don’t think no great shakes of Lanyard.”

Carleton had laid much emphasis upon the parts of the letter in which the gallant writer had laid claim to great familiarity with Ralph, and magnified his own feats, to the great amusement of the company, who were, however, too well bred to mortify Captain Tandy by obstreperous mirth ; and the carriages having been ordered, they took leave of him.

“ Well, Ralph,” said Carleton, next day, “ what do you think of the free-and-easy style of your young friend, and the quiet way in which he appropriates to himself the honours of the day. Even Merivale himself is Old Merry, forsooth !”

“ Why, I think,” said Ralph, “ that I have seen other letters from older men in more elevated stations, where I, I, I, is quite as prominent, and you must allow, after all, that it is a proper midshipman’s letter to his father, which, however it may begin, is sure to end in asking for money. He is a saucy, precocious brat, but Tit is a brave little fellow, and will make a good officer yet.”

CHAPTER XI.

RALPH RUTHERFORD had soon nearly regained his usual state of health, a blessing of which he now knew the full value, though he was still weak. Carleton remained at Trevor House about ten days, passing much of his time at the Lodge and the Cottage, and enlivening their little circle much. Shuldham's stay had been very short. He had been appointed to the 'Boadicea,' and Bromhead, who was still a severe sufferer, had at length been promoted, while Birchall was

appointed to command the 'Goelan,' which had been directed to rejoin Captain Merivale. Shuldham was ordered to take a passage in her; and Ralph, to whose recommendation Shuldham owed this appointment, considered it a short road to his friend's promotion, though Laura by no means approved of it.

Carleton and Laura being thus left, their usual morning walk was to the Cottage, taking the Lodge in the way, Laura generally leaving her friends to continue their stroll in the grounds, whilst she passed through the little gate which led to the cottage-garden to enjoy a quiet chat with Julia, and this arrangement seemed equally agreeable to all parties. Carleton brought all the naval news to Ralph, for there were no Naval or Military Gazettes and United Service Journals in those days, to record every movement and to discuss the merits or demerits of every appointment.

Lutkins had been dismissed from his ship by the Court-Martial, and was thought to have had a narrow escape from a more severe sentence ; but as he never could be employed again, much less promoted, it was perhaps sufficiently severe even for the tyrannical, conceited man who had been the first on promotion for no merits of his own.

There is a charm in talking over professional events with brother officers, which none but the initiated can fully comprehend. No man was less of a gossip than Rutherford, yet was he deeply interested by these communications from his lively friend, for there was little public record then of the proceedings of men in office, and the few who were, or assumed to be, in their confidence or in that of the clerks of the office, dispensed their oracular remarks to greedy ears.

It had become a question, now that Ralph could sit his horse, and enter freely into

society once more, whether they should not quit the Cottage and seek a dwelling of their own. Ralph had now his thousand a-year, with all the advantages accruing from rich and liberal friends, of whom Uncle Peter was a glorious specimen.

Mrs. Rutherford gave no opinion: but she resisted Julia's earnest entreaties to live with Ralph and her.

"No, my dear Julia," said the sensible and judicious matron, "to visit you, or to receive you, will be the greatest pleasure of my life, but I do not approve of parents living in the house of their married children. I have seen enough of the world to know that, with the happiest dispositions on all sides, it does not answer. All parties are placed in a false position, and mischief must ensue." Then, kissing her white forehead, "Julia, my love," she said, "it would break my heart to be, or

for a moment to imagine myself, Madame de Trop.”

There was an affectionate earnestness in this reply, though cheerfully and even playfully spoken, which Julia felt to be unanswerable. She embraced Mrs. Rutherford fondly, and ceased to urge the point.

Julia and her husband now made frequent little excursions on horseback to reconnoitre the residences vacant, or likely to become so. Carleton had left them, and they did not half like quitting the cottage where they had suffered and enjoyed so much, though it was inconveniently small. Ralph felt that his mother was right in declining to live with them, for he habitually revered all her decisions, as did indeed Julia herself. There was a simple, straightforward energy, not of manner but of mind, about Mrs. Rutherford, that carried weight with it, for she always

acted from high and pure principles, and her judgment was sound. She had learnt true wisdom in the school of affliction, and trod the path of life with a firm, unwavering, yet gentle step. Her late blessings had only served to awaken her heart to a more deep sense of piety and gratitude, and that Ralph and Julia shared these feelings exquisitely, had filled her cup of joy to the brim. She sometimes trembled lest it should overflow, but she was truly happy.

Mr. Carteret rode down to the Cottage one morning at an unusually early hour. Ralph and Julia were still at the breakfast-table with Mrs. Rutherford, but Julia started up to meet her father.

“Nothing unpleasant has happened, I hope, to send you forth so unusually early, my dear father?” she said.

“Something has happened, Julia,” he replied, “to a person wholly unknown to us,

which may, or may not, be of importance to you." Then, as he entered the room, "Rutherford," he said, "I have never spoken to you of your relative, Lord Rutherford. As you never mentioned him, I did not choose to approach a subject which Mrs. Rutherford and you appeared to shun; but see this paragraph." And drawing from his pocket a newspaper, he read as follows:—

"We regret to announce that young Lord Rutherford, whilst out with his hounds, received a severe fall from his horse, and it is feared that the consequences may be fatal. The noble Lord is only twenty-five years of age, has recently succeeded his father in this ancient title, and report says, was shortly to have been united to the fair daughter of a noble Earl in a neighbouring county.'"

Mr. Carteret awaited Ralph's reply.

"This," said Ralph, "is a melancholy event. Should it prove fatal, I am the

nearest heir, though with a possessor nearly as young as myself, whose projected marriage had been announced in the public papers, I never entertained the most distant idea of succeeding to the family title and estates. Nor will I even now indulge such an expectation, but rather hope that the unfortunate young man may recover and enjoy his honours. And yet, my Julia,—” he added turning affectionately to his young wife, “is worthy of the coronet, and would well become it.”

“I have nothing to wish for in this world now,” replied the bride; “but that you may get no more of those formidable Admiralty letters, with their frightful, blood-red seals, which so terrify me.”

“I never knew the family,” said Mrs. Rutherford; “but, barring family pride. I have never heard them ill spoken of. My poor husband, though he strongly resented

their conduct to his mother, and renounced them perhaps more sternly than they did him, always spoke of them with great respect ; and of this poor young man we knew nothing.”

“They have always been prudent in money matters,” said Ralph, “for pride, which bears sometimes such bitter fruits, was with them genuine pride. They ever lived within their income, which was rather small for their rank ; and as most of their tenants had been born and bred on the property, which is rather extensive than fertile, sons generally succeeding to their fathers’ farms. The rents were moderate, and the tenants, in easy circumstances, were devoted to their landlord. He had a strong tincture of old North country feeling : lived like a little king upon his own estate, and rarely visited London for a longer time than sufficed to make his bow at Court. Such was the late Lord, and such

his son, who was wholly addicted to country sports, especially to fox hunting and shooting, and fishing in his own preserves and waters.”

The following day's paper recorded the death of the young nobleman, with a high panygeric upon his character. A serious consultation now ensued, and Ralph requested Mr. Carteret to prepare to go down to Rutherford Castle as soon as he should receive official notice of the death of his distant cousin, and of his own succession.

The next day brought a letter from Mr. Sterling, the solicitor to the family, requesting directions from Ralph, now Viscount Rutherford, respecting the funeral, and suggesting the immediate presence of some confidential friend of the new Peer. A letter came also from the Reverend Philip Wardour, Vicar of Rutherford, who requested instructions re-

specting the funeral. He had been a college friend of the father, and tutor to the late Lord, whose loss he deplored very feelingly.

Mr. Carteret having been furnished with proper authority, set off for Rutherford Castle.

There could be no deep grief for a person whom none of the family had known or even seen ; but there was in the fate of this young nobleman, cut off thus suddenly in his youth amidst his prosperity, an awful lesson ; and the honours thus unexpectedly devolving upon Ralph, were taken up in a spirit which proved that he felt a deep responsibility in assuming rank and wealth, and especially the duties of an hereditary legislator of this great country—one of the highest and proudest dignities upon earth, when its duties are properly appreciated and honourably fulfilled. But woe to the low-minded man who shall not only neglect those duties, but as far as in him

lies bring disgrace and discredit upon hereditary dignities by mean, base, and sordid conduct. He is a vile transgressor against God and man, and a traitor to his country as well as to his order, by him morally and constitutionally degraded. From his suicidal hand does the rabid destroyer of all that is good and great, the blood-thirsty revolutionist, receive his most deadly weapon, his most poisonous shaft. 'Tis thus that some high-born profligate brings obloquy upon the host of noble and generous spirited men who adorn the peerage, and form an aristocracy which is continually receiving accessions from the most distinguished of the people, whilst their younger sons and all the junior branches of their race fall back into the popular ranks, relying chiefly upon their own energies for distinction.

Ralph knew and felt this. He was no *parvenu*; and if he was proud of his ancient

blood he well knew the public duties which his rank imposed upon him, and as he had ever in a humble station performed its duties scrupulously, so he now purposed to fulfil also those of his more elevated sphere.

Letters arrived from Mr. Carteret.

“Mr. Sterling,” he said, “is a sort of hereditary solicitor to the family, and is worthy of all confidence. He says the estates are not more than seven thousand a year; but there are also coal mines, the produce of which is considerable but uncertain, averaging perhaps three thousand per annum. The rents of the estates are low, but there are neither defaulters nor dilapidations. The farm buildings have been well kept up, and the castle is in excellent repair. There is no will, and the personal property is considerable, including jewels, plate, furniture, pictures, cellars, and a large stud of horses. Mr. Sterling tells me that the vicar, Mr. Wardour,

is a very superior man. He is in deep affliction for the loss of his pupil and patron who was much attached to him. The late Lord had promised to Mr. Wardour the living of Oxmead, which is about eight hundred a year, the incumbent being very infirm and eighty years of age, but he still lives. It is therefore at your disposal; the vicarage is about three hundred and fifty pounds a year.

“ I have requested Mr. Wardour, in your name, to arrange the funeral as may best mark your respect for the deceased. Mr. Sterling will furnish the necessary funds, as there is a considerable sum in the hands of a banker in York. I will write more explicitly soon.”

The remains of the late Lord Rutherford were carried to the family vault, with all the usual honours. His numerous tenantry attended them to the grave with sorrowful

respect, accompanied by most of the neighbouring gentry.

Mr. Carteret's letters soon became mere matters of business. He had always been accustomed to the management of property and delighted in it, for Uncle Peter, though older and very much more wealthy than Andrew, had always left business to his brother. He detested it.

“Well, my dear Julia,” said Edith, “so you are really a Viscountess—that most elegant of titles. I should like to see the family jewels; but I must I suppose forget the familiar Julia, and address your Ladyship in all due form. Now mamma is a Ladyship too, but she has not that delightful *The* which so beautifully indicates, The Right Honourable. Every knight's wife is my Lady, but *The* makes it delightful.”

“And what have you been thinking about, Edith,” said Julia archly, “that

you are become so learned in such matters, and make such nice distinctions ?”

Edith blushed, and Julia good-naturedly changed the subject.

“ We think of going to town, Edith. Indeed Ralph, or as I must learn to call him, Lord Rutherford, must go, which of course implies my going too, so I came to propose, Edith, that your mamma and you should go with us, and that you should be presented at the same time with me. Your mamma has been at Court frequently, though not very lately.”

This was to Edith a delightful proposal, and Lady Evandale acquiesced with much pleasure. Edith was gone: she had seen Laura approaching the Lodge, and had flown to her confidante to talk over the presentation, and who he might meet in town.

Mrs. Rutherford preferred to stay at the

cottage. It had become very dear to her, yet she contemplated leaving it, for Ralph and Julia were as the breath of life to her. She fondly hoped that his new occupations would wean him from his dangerous profession. Mr. Carteret had described a small, but beautiful cottage in the park, about a quarter of a mile from the castle, and Ralph, who knew her wish to dwell apart, had made a point that she should give her own orders about fitting it up.

“Stay with us, my dear mother,” he said, “whilst you, and I, and Julia amuse ourselves with preparing your hermitage. I suspect we shall get that dear old Mr. Brooks amongst us, too.”

Mrs. Rutherford’s plans were thus settled, and soon afterwards the Rector of Oxmead being dead, Ralph wrote the following letter to Mr. Wardour :

“ Dear Sir,

“ Oxmead has become vacant, and with much pleasure I fulfil the intentions of my lamented predecessor, when I solicit your acceptance of it.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ RUTHERFORD.”

“ The house in Curzon Street, Julia,” said Ralph one day, “ is I learn like all the rest of the property, in excellent condition, though it has not been recently used by the family. The furniture is old-fashioned, which will suit us, my love, as we are a considerable extent old world people, and we do not run after fashionable novelties. We must not throw away the reality of happiness to pursue its shadow.”

Such was the tone adopted by the heir of the ancient House of Rutherford, and he was in all things consistent. His views were echoed by Julia, and they prepared

to proceed to London. Mr. Carteret still remained in Yorkshire : Uncle Peter and Laura accompanied them to town, and the Evandales were to follow shortly.

Lord Rutherford was for some time fully occupied with business ; but he accompanied Julia and Laura, to whom London was altogether new, to the more attractive of the theatres and exhibitions. They were soon joined by Edith and her mother, and Carleton became a very diligent and agreeable attendant upon their little excursions. His own family were in Italy, but he knew the town well.

Ralph had received the congratulations of Mr. Brooks, to which he was enabled to reply thus :

“ My dear Sir,

“ I wish I may be as happy in my new situation as I was in my old one. As the sphere of duty enlarges, so does the responsi-

bility. You knew me when I had little of this world's goods ; yet was I a happy, or at least a contented, man, and your example tended to make me so. I hope and trust you will give me the benefit of that example in my prosperity. The Vicarage of my own parish is vacant, Mr. Wardour having been removed to a more valuable living. It is worth three hundred and fifty pounds a year, with an excellent cottage-built vicarage, and a good glebe. The late incumbent was a scholar, and a man of taste—a great gardener, moreover ; so that if you will accept it, you will find all things in order. Your old friend, Uncle Peter, insists upon furnishing it. He says he knows your tastes better than we youngsters do, and Julia adds, with her kind regards, that Reuben and his family will find the South Lodge very comfortable. We cannot give him the clerk's situation, because it is filled by a very worthy person ; but Reuben shall be no loser by that. Lady

Rutherford hopes you will transfer your household to the Vicarage, including Amy. Jack Brady is promoted. There will be ample room at the Lodge for them all, and I fear you must provide yourself with another handmaiden.

“Yours truly,

“RUTHERFORD.”

Mr. Brooks accepted thankfully an offer which promised him the society of his beloved friends, and relieved him from great difficulties.

“My physical powers,” he wrote, “are no longer equal to the duties of this extensive cure, though I may hope to be still useful in a narrower sphere. Your kind offer, which is as much beyond my merits as it was beyond my expectations, has come most opportunely to give me a haven of rest, though not, I trust, of indolence, in my old age. Reuben Brady and his wife will prove faithful servants, and,

to confess the whole truth, I am glad to find that he is willing to resign his clerkship. John Brady has arrived here. He says he is a boatswain on the ordinary, and has leave. You will understand this, though I do not ; but I have published their bans. Amy and he will therefore arrive as man and wife, to my great satisfaction, for I can safely recommend her to the patronage of Lady Rutherford.”

The good man was rather diffuse in his style of letter-writing, which, however, by no means extended to his sermons, which, as his whole heart was in them, were equally concise and energetic, abounding in enlarged views, expressed with equal piety and humility.

Time passed rapidly : Julia went through the ordeal of presentation with great credit. Indeed, her fine form and graceful carriage partook largely of that waving, flexible, yet lofty and dignified air which so well became

Josephine on the Imperial Throne, and which was well adapted to display to advantage the rich family jewels which Julia seemed born to dignify.

The descendant of an ancient house, when he assumes the title of his ancestors, is received with a cordiality denied to new-born rank, unless when duly varnished by glorious achievements. Many, especially of the northern nobility, were more or less connected with the house of Rutherford, and warmly did they greet the gallant youth and his lovely bride.

“ Well, Uncle Peter,” said Ralph one day, “ where will you find society so attractive ? There will be Julia, Laura, my good mother, and Mr. Brooks. Julia will enjoy the conservatories as much as you will, and I shall ever recollect that you gave her to me when I was not only without fortune, but without the slightest prospect of obtaining one ; and that you moreover gave us a handsome independence, and relieved me from the painful

conviction that I had brought poverty on the woman I loved. You really must choose a suite of apartments where you can do exactly as you please, and fix your abode at the Castle. We will not part with you. Can we, Julia?" he said, appealing to Lady Rutherford, who had just joined them.

Uncle Peter was never good at refusing, and probably never refused any request of Julia's in her whole life, and he now yielded with a good grace. Indeed he would have been wretched without his nieces, to whose society he had been so long accustomed, and he had his own plans for Laura.

Lord Rutherford having fully performed the duties he owed to society in town, was too happy to retire to domestic happiness at Rutherford Castle, deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude to God for all the blessings so bountifully bestowed upon him, and firmly resolved to perform his duty to the best of his judgment in the elevated station to which

he had been called. Julia was the faithful partner of his aspirations, and Mrs. Rutherford, who had so nobly met the difficulties and privations of her early life, saw, at last, her fondest hopes more than realized. Mr. Carteret found much occupation in London. He liked business, and much devolved upon him from his brother and his son-in-law.

Laura had begun to think it long since they had heard from Shuldham, though she said nothing. At length a packet from the 'Boadicea' arrived, in which the absent Lieutenant thus addressed Ralph :—

“ My dear friend,

“ We have learned, with great pleasure, by papers lately come to hand, of your accession to your family title, and property ; and there has been much rejoicing here upon the occasion. McDonald, who has attached himself to me for your sake, is delighted. Griffiths, Shopronoff, and all your old friends, no less

so ; and Captain Merivale, to whom I carried the first intelligence of the important event, was much gratified, and congratulated me as your friend, for it is to that friendship that I owe my situation here, and I may say Captain Merivale's confidence. 'Our friend, Mr. Shuldham, he said, in his grave emphatic way, 'will do honour to any rank. I have known him long and well, and a more single-minded, high-principled young man I have never met.' I am going to send the 'Swift' home. Give notice that there will be an opportunity for letters to-morrow. Present my congratulations to Lord Rutherford, and assure him that I am highly gratified by the event ;' and, indeed, I never saw such strong indications of delight upon that grave and intellectual countenance. Brady has received a boatswain's warrant, and has gone home : I doubt not but you will see him. We have had some success, but nothing worth speaking about. Captain Merivale declined to allow

Tit Tandy to go with Birchall into the 'Goelan.' He says truly, that the boy, to do him justice, ought to be curbed, and not encouraged.

"It is a curious fact, that soon after you left the 'Boadicea,' Tit Tandy, having been sent to the fore-castle, by Birchall, with a message, whilst the ship was in stays with a double-reefed top-sail breeze, the youngster was rash enough to step over the main-jack just as they swung the mainyard. He was thrown half-way up to the maintop. Fortunately he fell in board, but they feared he was killed. He was carried to the hospital, where it was soon found that he had received no material injury; and, from that moment, the boy began to grow, and now, really bids fair to attain to a reasonable height.

"I need not tell you my presumptuous hopes. Laura is everything to me, and I confide all my hopes of happiness to your faithful friendship; but if you awakened me

from a course of idleness and folly, it has been the sweet image of my pure and gentle Laura—the bright star of my existence—which has been my most precious safeguard. Uncle Peter has certainly favoured me, and your Julia too. My trust and confidence in all three are perfect, and upon it I rest my hopes.

“ May every happiness attend you and Lady Rutherford ; I hope I may also reckon dear Mrs. Rutherford amongst my friends. Still I have my occasional doubts and fears, where my all of happiness is so painfully at stake. Of Laura herself I am not entitled to speak. I could not, in honour, seek to entangle that dear girl in an engagement which might mar her prospects in life ; yet she is all gentleness and confiding truthfulness, and I venture to think, that were I supported by those she best loves, she would not have the heart to reject me.

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ CHARLES SHULDHAM.”

Rutherford, when he received this letter, was settled in the mansion of his forefathers, with all the elements of happiness around him. Mr. Brooks had arrived with his little colony from Seaham cum Lapwater. Reuben was delighted with his lodge ; and like some other veterans, after contending somewhat unreasonably that he was still fit for service, submitted to be shelved with a good grace. He was constant in his attendance at church, and magnanimously made acquaintance with his successful rival in the clerkship ; for Reuben, though somewhat hasty, bore no malice.

Uncle Peter and Mr. Brooks became great friends. The good vicar induced him to study the Scriptures and to devote his few remaining days to piety and charity, which last he had ever practised in its highest and purest sense. To give was his delight, but it was necessary to regulate and control Uncle Peter's charities, for he was by nature kind-hearted and generous. But he learned

from his venerable friend, that one thing more was needful to hallow and to sanctify his good deeds, and Peter Carteret, under such guidance, attained a degree of happiness vouchsafed to few.

Mrs. Rutherford saw all this with unspeakable delight, and soon the prospect of an heir to the house of Rutherford completed her satisfaction.

Jack Brady and his bride found ample room at the lodge. His parents no longer needed his support. Amy and Jack were therefore rich in their degree, and Amy looked with amazement upon a bag of guineas which Brady had brought home.

Jack himself found ample occupation for his leisure hours in fitting and tending a beautiful little yacht upon the lake; and many a delightful hour was spent by Julia and Laura, but never without Rutherford's protection, in the little "Julia."

Uncle Peter and Mr. Brooks having

one day declined to venture upon what they seemed to think a dangerous expedition, they left them on the strand.

“My Lord,” said Jack, who entertained much respect for the Vicar, “the Reverend don’t know how you and I can handle the craft, though her Ladyship do,”

Amy had drilled Jack with great care into saying my Lord, and your Ladyship ; but little dashes of familiarity would break out now and then, especially when he alluded to Ralph’s seamanship, which was, after all, his highest acquisition in Jack Brady’s eyes.

Uncle Peter and Mr. Carteret consented to sanction Shuldham’s addresses to Laura, whose inclinations were no secret to them. His property was small, but Uncle Peter undertook to remedy that ; and as there was little doubt that his present position would soon lead to his promotion, it was resolved to wait for that event. Julia was

authorised to communicate the family counsels to Laura, which set her heart at ease.

An account soon after arrived that the 'Boadicea' had captured an enemy's frigate after a severe action. The prize had been spoken in the Channel under the command of Lieutenant Shuldham, and thus they were saved from all anxiety about him.

Doctor Seacombe had attained some eminence as a practitioner in town. Lord George was the acknowledged suitor of Edith Evandale; but it was supposed they must wait till the lady was of age.

"I have a letter my love," said Lord Rutherford, "from Bromhead. He has quite recovered, and expects a frigate daily. His long confinement, and the leisure it forced upon him, has led him to serious reflection, and Bromhead has seen his errors. He has become a religious character, which was all that was wanted in him. He was

always a brave, zealous and intelligent officer.”

“ I am very glad to hear it,” replied Julia, “ though I do not know him, and always entertained a sort of horror of him for having so unnecessarily led you into so much danger and suffering. But what book have you there, which you seem to make a mystery of ?”

“ It is the ‘ Book of Beauty,’ my love, and its chief ornament is, JULIA, VICOUNTESS RUTHERFORD !”

THE END.

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