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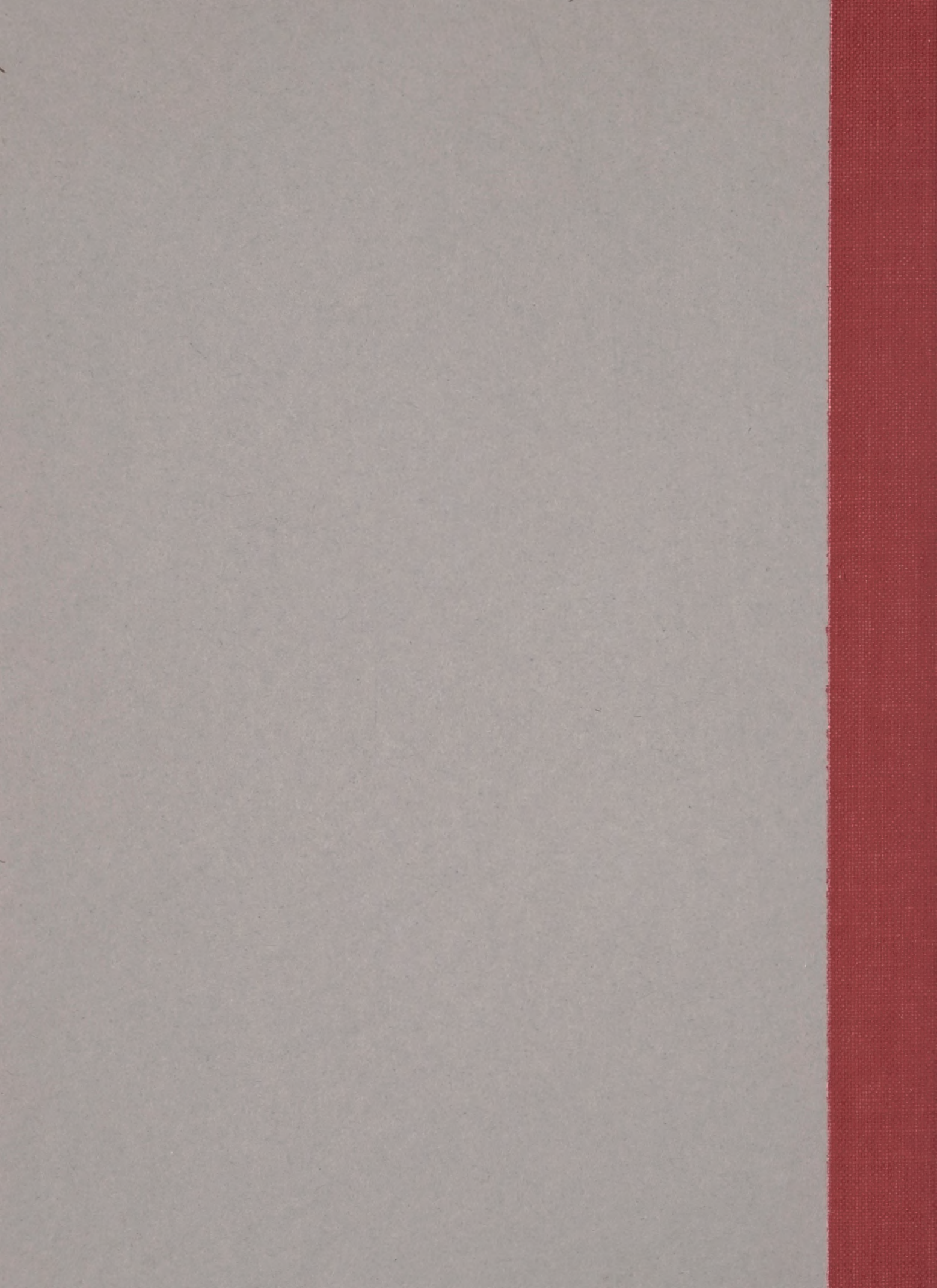
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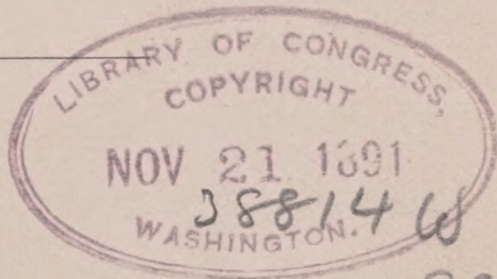
AFLOAT AND ASHORE,

— BY —

EDWARD EVERETT HALE,

AUTHOR OF

"HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES," "MAN WITHOUT
A COUNTRY," "IN HIS NAME," ETC.



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AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

A Marblehead boy!

That means very little to the boys and girls scattered up and down through America now. But this is a story of several months of the fifth year of the Revolutionary war, and then the words "a Marblehead boy" meant a great deal.

I will call this boy's name Hiram Flood. To say that he lived in Marblehead is to say that he could swim ever since he could remember, that he could take a dory out through the surf or bring her back through the surf and not take in a teaspoonful of water. It is to say that he had, often and often, gone out in what they called the fishing-boats, which most of you boys and girls would

think quite large vessels ; that he was not afraid of the salt water, or of icicles on the rigging,—and that, in short, there was nothing he could not do in the water. I am afraid he knew nothing about the greatest common divisor, and that he did not know the difference between a predicate and an object—indeed, that he had never heard of either. But he could say the Lord's prayer and “ Now I lay me down to sleep ; ” he could write his name so you could read it ; and he could read his bible and his newspaper.

Hiram Flood's father was with Mugford in one of the little vessels with which Washington used to annoy the English fleet, when Boston was besieged. The vessel ran aground as she was trying to get away from some of the large English cruisers. All they could do was to fire shot at her and they did not want to do that, because they wanted to save her. So they sent their boats to take her, and Mugford and his men beat off boat after boat, as the brave English sailors came up to

them. But poor Mugford himself was killed, and so was Jonas Flood, Hiram Flood's father. And when the little schooner ran into Marblehead, her flag was at half mast; and all the boys waiting on the wharves, and all the men and women, knew that there was disaster. Jonas Flood's body was buried the same day that Mugford's body was buried; and his boys and his girls and their mother were left in the queer little house on the top of the rocks, without him.

Then the younger boys had to be satisfied as they could when Hiram said that he was going to ship with Captain Pickman, in the privateer "Flying Fish," which was going out from Salem. They were not big enough to ship with him. For one of the boys had been over the day before, and he said that Captain Pickman would take nobody who was not sixteen years old, and that he would take nobody unless his mother sent a letter with him. But Hiram was fortunately ten days more than sixteen years old. And his mother knew that

somehow the children must be fed and the house kept warm. And so, with the tears in her eyes, as soon as her husband's body was in the grave, she wrote the letter to Captain Pickman. It was a badly spelled letter, and the paper was blistered with tears, but it said that Hiram was a good boy, and would neither drink nor lie nor steal; and that was all that Captain Pickman wanted. So Hiram went on his first voyage.

They went down into the West Indies in the "Flying Fish," and they caught three or four English vessels—one a large ship which had strayed away from her companions, and Hiram was put in the prize crew which took her safely back to Salem. The ship was sold at auction, and the money was divided between the captain, the mates and the sailors of the privateer, by just the same law by which, in those days, as in these days, the money made by selling a cargo of fish was divided. And so it was that, in only seven months after Hiram's father died, he came back to his

mother with a little bag of Spanish silver dollars, and with three hundred dollars in Continental currency—and in those days Continental currency was worth a great deal more than it was afterward.

He was willing to stay at home for a little while and to take care of the garden. He made his younger brothers work, as even their mother could not do. He had dug the ground over for spring, and had two large loads of good manure hauled upon it, when one of the other sailor boys, who came up from Boston, told him that the "Alliance" was going to sail, and that she would have on board the "Marquis," as they all called General Lafayette. The other Marblehead boy had shipped on the "Alliance," and he told Hiram that it was a great deal better to be on a Continental ship than on a privateer. He told him that you were sure of something, and that, although you did not make so large shares as he had had on the "Flying Fish," you were quite sure that there would be some fighting and some prizes, and that you would

not come home poor. And he said that in the naval service, as they began to call it, the rules were stricter; so that mates and others had to be humane, and that young seamen were better treated on the whole than the chances were that they would be on a privateer. If Hiram could have sailed with Captain Pickman again he would have done so; but he could not do that. So he coaxed his mother to let him go again, and he went on foot to Boston, and shipped in the "Alliance."

It was a wretched set among whom he found himself. Queerly enough, the Yankee boy was more at home among the Frenchmen of the crew than among the sailors of the mess where he was first thrown. The "Alliance" herself was a capital ship. She had been built in Massachusetts, was not long afloat, and took her name from the fortunate alliance with France. Unfortunately, to show the confidence of the United States in their illustrious ally, the government had given the com-

mand of the "Alliance" to a French officer named Landais. He went crazy afterward, and at this time he was so queer and wild that old sailors would not ship under him. Nothing so plainly shows how green and how patriotic at once was our hero, as his willingness to go out under Landais. But he had a boy's notions. He meant to serve the country and he would serve at first-hand. He had rather take his orders from the government than from any skipper, whose first thought, perhaps, was for profit. So without even asking advice of the old Tom Coffins who were hanging about the Boston wharves, he signed the articles and entered into the service of the United States.

From day to day, after he had been mustered into service, they lingered in Boston. There was nothing he was not made to do in the service of the ship, from carrying a letter to the State House to the chairman of the Naval Committee, round to taking his turn in the caboose, as a temporary

cook. Sailors would not enlist, and only a few landsmen even, under a man like Landais. A few Frenchmen signed the rolls, because they wanted to go back to France. But all the advertising, and drinking, and begging, which Landais and his more intelligent officers could devise, would not fill up the crew.

And in the midst of all came to Boston the "Marquis," as every one called Lafayette. He was to go in the "Alliance" to his own country. Everybody longed to see the Marquis, and to sail with the Marquis was proposed as a great inducement. But sailors would not go any more because the Marquis was on board.

While everything was waiting, the English man-of-war "Somerset" was wrecked on Cape Cod, but all her men were saved. In despair for sailors, Landais asked leave to enlist some of these Englishmen on the "Alliance." They were glad enough to change their flag, or said they were. And the end of the matter was that she went to

sea, in the middle of January, with perhaps the worst crew that ever sailed—a few Americans, more Frenchmen, and forty or fifty Englishmen, of whom nobody knew anything, except that they said they were sick of King George. But the Marquis yearned to go to sea, and to sea the “Alliance” went.

Hiram had very much his choice, as an early comer, as to his mess and gun. But it happened, when the voyage was half over, that he had made a sailor’s acquaintance with a Bordeaux boy named Francois Coppee, hardly older than he was. Hiram had spent a winter at Port au Prince, and could talk French in a fashion. So he and Coppee became quite friendly, and Hiram got himself transferred to the larboard battery and messed with the Frenchman. On this accidental change as things happened, a great deal turned.

The deck leaked above his own hammock one stormy night, and he took his blanket and a heavy quilt his mother had given him, and made his bed

on the floor between his own gun and the stern-chaser which the "Alliance" carried. The night was rough, and in a sudden pitch he struck his head against the wheel of the gun carriage so heavily that he was well awakened. He pulled himself together however, wrapped his blanket tighter round him, and tried for sleep again. But now he could not but hear the whispered talk of two men whose hammocks were nearly over him. Both of them spoke in French, and in the security of men who supposed they would not be understood by any listener.

To Hiram's horror, they were coolly discussing the plans of the mutiny, by which the Englishmen in the ship meant to surprise the officers, and take her into England. They had confided in these two Frenchmen, because they were deserters from the French navy, who might be shot in France. The plan was that the lookout should cry "Sail ho!" when most of the officers and all the passengers were below. As they came on deck to see

the sail, each of them was to be seized at the companion.

All this was to be done the very next day. In the midst of the talk of the men the officer on duty walked aft, and they stopped. Hiram did not dare speak to him then, or give any suspicion by being awake when he was not on duty. Nor, when morning came, did he dare tell Landais. He was so crazy and fitful that the messenger of such tidings might be tied up and flogged, quite as probably as praised. Hiram waited till the Marquis came on deck for a walk, which he always took before breakfast. Then he joined him and led him off to a place where they would be quite alone. He talked in French, in a whisper. Lafayette was almost beside himself with his surprise and anxiety. He also knew by this time how unfit was Landais, even for the confidence which must now be placed in him. He charged the boy to continue his watchfulness, and hurried to find the first lieutenant.

That officer was hardly willing to speak to him. Clearly, he also was intensely excited about something.

“I know what you have on your mind,” said Lafayette. “Perhaps I have the same news with you.” And he told him what Flood had said to him.

It was true. The lieutenant had himself received, from an Irishman, who had been approached by the men concerned in the plot, the same news which Hiram had brought to the Marquis.

They were but just in time. But they were in time. The tables were turned, and instead of the mutineers arresting the officers and passengers, the officers and passengers arrested the mutineers. Fortunately for Lafayette, fortunately for the ship, they had postponed the execution of the plot from the morning to the afternoon. In that postponement, the whole prospect of success was lost. Just before the time when the signal was to be given, all the officers and all the passengers rushed on

deck with their swords drawn. The American and French seamen joined them on the instant, and seized the mutineers. Thirty or forty of them were put in irons, and so the ship was saved.

It may be well imagined that from this moment Lafayette and "his boy," as he always called Hiram, were drawn closely together. When they landed, he went up to the city with Lafayette; and if this story were the place, a queer account could be given of the experiences of a Marblehead boy in Paris, in the midst of its sights and wonders. But this story is rather to tell how Hiram Flood came to England, and what happened to him there.

Lafayette was at the top of favor. He was the favorite of women. He was the favorite of men. He was even the favorite at court, where his disobedience of orders two years before was pardoned. And every plan was made for him to take command of a military force of the French, which was to make a landing on the south coast of England. Paul Jones or somebody was to command a

fleet, and France was to invade England, this time with perfect success. In the midst of all this triumph, Lafayette did not forget Hiram Flood. Indeed, he prized the boy so much by this time that he knew how he could make him of service to his country. And so it was that he gave him a commission to cross alone, and in advance, to England, that he might possess himself of information which would be of use to the great combined expedition which Lafayette was to command.

“Adieu, mon ami.” This was Lafayette’s parting with Hiram. He spoke in the odd mixture of French and English, glad always to show that he was an American, eager at the same time to say something, and so often using the words which were most familiar. “Be at home, be quite at home yonder, as if you were dans notre pays—in our own dear country—as if you were indeed at Marblehead, mon cher ami.” And he went on to explain again how important it was that, from the

moment he landed, there should be some one close at his side, who knew every cow-path and sheep-track; knew where one could find a horse or a cart on the instant.

He could not have found a more reliable or shifty agent than Hiram Flood. And before forty-eight hours were past, Hiram was on English ground. With the freemasonry of a sailor, he had made acquaintance with some men who were going to row across a boat load of brandy, the very night after he shook Lafayette's hand. The breeze favored them, and before daylight they were landing the little casks in a country which, in time of war, was not very eager about collecting duties. Hiram bade his friends good-bye, thanked them for the passage, for which he had more than paid by his vigorous work in the hours of daybreak, and found himself an Englishman.

Once well ashore, there was neither danger nor difficulty. He might have pinned the word Yankee on his breast, and no English law could have

interfered with him, unless he chose to volunteer the information that he had served against the crown. The English crown still held the Americans as rebels but not as foreigners. If a boy were seeking work on a farm in Devonshire he was not a rebel. And if that boy spoke reasonable English, no one so much as guessed that he had come from a country three thousand miles away. Hiram represented himself as what he was—a sailor landed from a long voyage. If he stopped at a farm house for a glass of milk, the good woman would be, like enough, glad to give it to the handsome lad who reminded her of her own boy. Or, if a churlish hind made him pay, he had been well provided with sixpences by Lafayette's care.

So, from day to day, he worked westward, till he came to the destination prescribed to him, and for a long morning tried his chances for an abode in different homes just outside of Plymouth. And just at noon he hit on what he might have dreamed

of. In a long lean-to, which had grown out from a prosperous farm house, open to the sun and air on the south side, more than twenty men and women were sitting at dinner. At the head was the farmer himself, a fine-looking, sunburned man, of more than fifty. He wore the working frock of a farmer. But above his head hung the broad black hat of a Quaker. And the moment he replied to Hiram's civil and careful address, he spoke in the Friend's language.

"Thee landed only on Second Day," he said, interpreting into that language Hiram's word "Monday." "And thee has not found work till now? Is thee used to stock and farming?"

Hiram took courage, and explained that he could mow, and drive a team, and had harvested oats. He took care not to speak of pumpkins or of Indian corn. He said, however, frankly, that he was more used to boats than to ploughs, and that he had come up the hillside to ask for work, because he had seen the little cutter which lay in the creek below.

The good-natured Quaker smiled benevolently, and said, "Thee is right there, my son. We should be poor farmers if we were not good fishermen. The pilchards know the boat, or ought to know her. And if thee gets in our oats with us, thee may have to haul a seine as well." Something had pleased him in the boy's frankness—perhaps in the color of his hands, and the hard callouses which sea service had marked on them. He bade him sit at a vacant place at the end of the table, and, when the ample meal was finished, Hiram was sent out into an orchard where some tree-planting was going on. At night he was called into the sitting-room, and formally engaged for the time which remained till Whitsunday. "If thee works as well as thee did to-day, we will talk then about a full year," said his new friend.

And so Hiram was placed, exactly where Lafayette would have placed him. And his daily duty to his new master compelled him to learn exactly what would be useful to his friend, the Mar-

quis—to the illustrious ally of America, and to his own dear country. This great blessing have republics—that boys or girls, no matter how humble be the place they live in, know that they are of use to the country which is their mother, and that they can serve her in their time.

The old Quaker, meanwhile, liked his new hand as much as the new hand liked his place. It soon appeared that Hiram came from the other side of the ocean. It appeared, as soon, that all the sympathies of Matthew Middle were with the rebels, though he would never admit that they helped their own cause when they took up arms.

It appeared also, as he had said at the first, that if he and his wife and children and the milkmaids and farm-hands whom Hiram saw dining together, all had to make their living from the sea-washed farm, their chances would be poor indeed. But if to the pork and milk and butter of the farm there were added the good guineas which came when the pilchards were sold, which were

the annual harvest of the sea, it was easy to account for the prosperity apparent on all sides. John Hawkins, who had long been the skipper of the boat, had this winter gone "to Lunnon" to try his fortune. John drank more than was good for him, and tales of London revels had tempted him away. Just at that moment, therefore, Hiram's native skill at the helm or with the sheets of the boat came precisely into play. Many was the morning when he was told to take the old Quaker's sons out in the neat little craft, to see what they could bring in for dinner. And so when Whitsunday came, he engaged with Nathan Middle again.

One thing Hiram Flood could not do. He could not go to bed at eight, as was the custom of the whole household. As they came to count him more and more one of themselves, this oddity of his was overlooked, and his best lonely hours were spent under the stars, as he walked to and fro, doubting and wondering when he should hear

of Lafayette's landing, and why it was delayed.

At length, however, he heard, by a mysterious channel, that "the Marquis" would not come; the French court had changed its plans. The same night, in one of his tramps, as he came up to their largest rick of hay—as big as a large house it was—Hiram noticed that Tweezer, the dog, was snarling. Tweezer was only too fond of sheep, and Hiram dared not take him as a companion unless he was tethered. But he knew very well that there were no sheep here. He let the dog loose, and instantly he flew to the shaded side of the hay-rick. Hiram followed almost as quickly.

"Call off your darned dog or I'll fix him—I tell you—" Such was the cry which greeted him. To Hiram's delighted ear, the words were spoken in the undiluted accent of New England.

"Who be ye, anyway?" answered Hiram. "How come any Yankee here? I'm a Yankee sailor myself."

It was enough, and on the instant a man as tall

as Tom Coffin emerged from the shelter he had made in the hay. "Whoever ye be, the good Lord sent ye. Nathan, Nathan!" he called, "et's all right. He's one on us."

They were two of a party of American prisoners, who had succeeded that very morning, three hours before sunrise, in breaking out from Dartmoor, the prison which gave so cruel a reception to hundreds of the seamen taken from American privateers. At the first moment the two supposed that Hiram was one of their own party.

"No," said he, "I'm nothin' but a farm-hand. But I'm one of you, an', thank God, I hain't been in that ere old hulk myself." And then they told him, trusting wholly in his voice, that there were nine more of their number not half a mile away.

Hiram said he could at least care for them the next day. He led the two carefully down to the landing, and put them in a garret over the fish-house. Some old sails and some fish boxes were kept there. "But ef ye keep quiet, nobody but me

will come nigh ye." And when he was sure that they would not miss the way, he permitted Nathan Ireson to go inland for the other nine stragglers. He would bring them bread enough for breakfast in the morning. And, not dissatisfied with his night's work, he went home, at midnight, to his bed.

Before daybreak, Hiram had knocked at Nathan Middle's door, wakened him, and told him the story. There were eleven escaped prisoners from Dartmoor in the sail loft.

The Quaker farmer sat on his bed, and made him tell the story again. "And has thee come to betray them to the enemy?" he asked.

"I have come to tell the truth to a friend," was the boy's reply. "The men need food. I know you will give it to them. I cannot, without stealing it from you; and I was not brought up to steal."

"Thee is not far from the Kingdom of God," said the well pleased old Friend; and he hurried

to clothe himself, conducted Hiram to his wife's store-rooms, loaded him with four of the large loaves there, and himself took the ham into which he had cut for supper. With such load he led the way to the shore; with such provision he supplied the prisoners.

As they fell to with ravenous appetite, he sat on the head of a barrel, and looked his approval of their hunger. He was no teetotaler, and he sent Hiram with the key up to the house to bring the largest bucket of home-brewed that he could carry. So soon as the boy returned, Nathan Middle made the longest speech of his life.

“We have no time to lose, friends. There will be a hue and cry here within an hour after sunrise. Hiram, thee must make a voyage. I should think to Cherburg; perhaps to America.” And then, as if he were sending the boy out for a day's fishing, he bade him take the men to the cutter, and with them be gone. “If thee is not out of sight by the time breakfast is done, thee is not the boy I thinks thee.’

Cherburg, if they could make Cherburg; but America if the wind held west or south-west. These were the sailing orders given to the astonished boy and to the men.

“Now we have no time to lose,” he said. “If thee has a fifty days’ voyage before thee, thee will need twelve large sacks of meal. They are in the grain house. Thee will need all the hams in the smoke house.” And he told off five men to go with Hiram to fetch them. “Most of all, thee will need water.” And he bade five of the others come along with him. In an hour’s work they had filled up the large tank with which the cutter was supplied, and had rolled down four hogsheads to be stowed away in her hold. “Thee will have light ballast,” said the good fellow; “but thee will do. And if thee goes to thine own country, there will be short allowance from the very first.”

“Et ain’t the fust time we Dartmoor boys have lived on a quart a day, you bet.” This was the comment of Asaph King.

“Thee must guess thy way, Hiram; but they say thee is good at guessing.”

“Ef a can't find Cherburg, I'm a bigger fool than a think a be,” said Hiram.

“Und ef he don't know what latitood Boston Light is in, he's a bigger,” said Asaph. And this was true.

“Youre see, sir,” said John Barnard with an awkward bow, “all on us that's fum Marblehead ez been to school; and we's all been to sea, tu. En ef any on um couldn't make the North Star forty-two degrees and a half above the 'rizon we'd know he was simple. That's all.”

What he said, Nathan did not understand; but that they were words of courage. They were enough for him. And on those words he bade them good-bye.

And that morning a stiff north-easter blew and blew, and blew them two hundred miles.

And the next day it blew, and the next; and before it was done blowing, the little cutter was half way across the Atlantic.

And on the twenty-sixth day after she sailed, at five in the morning, she ran into Salem Harbor, and rounded to under the lee of the "Queen Charlotte," a prize which had been brought in the day before.

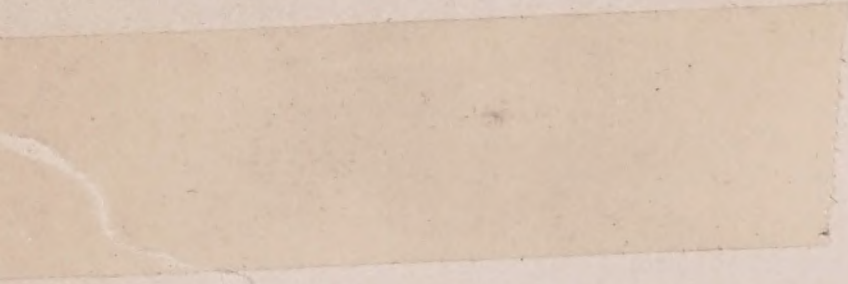
And Hiram Flood went in at his mother's front door, which was never locked for ninety years.

And he said :

"Here we be, Mother!"

THE END.





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