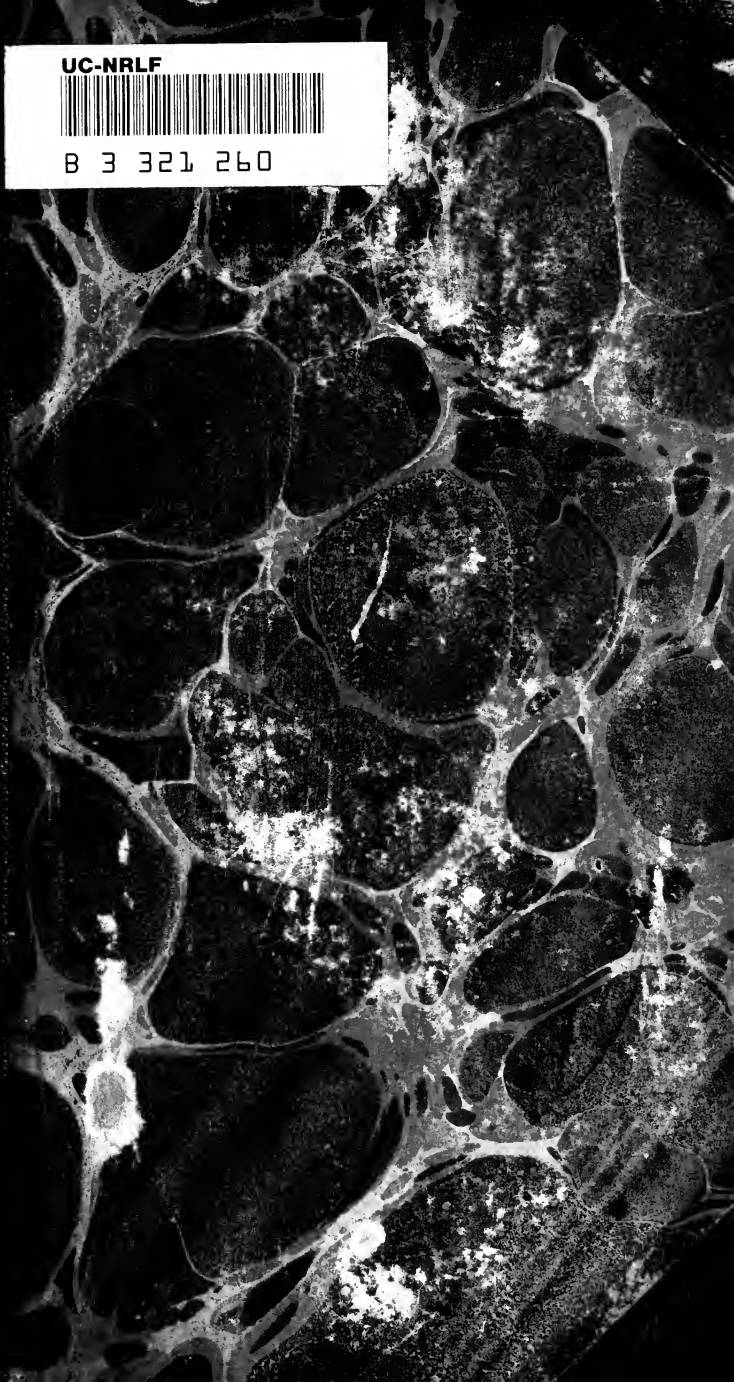


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THE
WATER WITCH;

OR,

THE SKIMMER OF THE SEAS.

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE BORDERERS,” “THE PRAIRIE,”

&c. &c.

“ Mais, que diable alloit-il faire dans cette galère ? ”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

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PREFACE.

CHRISTENDOM is gradually extricating itself from the ignorance, ferocity, and crimes of the middle ages. It is no longer subject of boast that the hand which wields the sword never held a pen, and men have long since ceased to be ashamed of knowledge. The multiplied means of imparting principles and facts, and a more general diffusion of intelligence, have conduced to establish sounder ethics and juster practices throughout the whole civilized world. Thus he who admits the conviction, as hope declines with his years, that man deteriorates, is probably as far from truth as the visionary who sees the dawn of a golden age in the commencement of the nineteenth century. That we have greatly improved on the opinions and practices

of our ancestors, is quite as certain as that there will be occasion to meliorate the legacy of morals which we shall transmit to posterity.

When the progress of civilization compelled Europe to correct the violence and injustice which was so openly practised until the art of printing became known, the other hemisphere made America the scene of those acts which shame prevented her from exhibiting nearer home. There was little of a lawless, mercenary, violent, and selfish nature, that the self-styled masters of the continent hesitated to commit, when removed from the immediate responsibilities of the society in which they had been educated. The Drakes, Rogers, and Dampiers of that day, though enrolled in the list of naval heroes, were no other than pirates, acting under the sanction of commissions ; and the scenes that occurred among the marauders of the land, were often of a character to disgrace human nature.

That the colonies which formed the root of this republic escaped the more serious evils of a so gross and widely spreading corruption, can

only be ascribed to the characters of those by whom they were peopled.

Perhaps nine-tenths of all the white inhabitants of the Union are the direct descendants of men who quitted Europe, in order to worship God according to conviction and conscience. If the Puritans of New England, the Friends of Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, the Catholics of Maryland, the Presbyterians of the upper counties of Virginia, and of the Carolinas, and the Huguenots, brought with them the exaggeration of their peculiar sects, it was an exaggeration that tended to correct most of their ordinary practices. Still the English Provinces were not permitted altogether to escape from the moral dependency that seems nearly inseparable from colonial government, or to be entirely exempt from the wide contamination of the times.

The State of New York, as is well known, was originally a colony of the United Provinces. The settlement was made in the year 1613, and the Dutch East India Company, under whose authority the establishment was made, claimed the whole country between the Connecticut and

the mouth of Delaware Bay ; a territory which, as it had a corresponding depth, equalled the whole surface of the present kingdom of France. Of this vast region, however, they never occupied but a narrow belt on each side of the Hudson, with here and there a settlement on a few of the river flats more inland.

There is a providence in the destiny of nations that sets at nought the most profound of human calculations. Had the dominion of the Dutch continued a century longer, there would have existed in the very heart of the Union, a people opposed to its establishment by their language, origin and habits. The conquest of the English in 1663, though unjust and iniquitous in itself, removed the danger, by opening the way for the introduction of that great community of character which now so happily prevails.

Though the English, the French, the Swedes, the Dutch, the Danes, the Spaniards and the Norwegians, all had colonies within the country which now composes the United States, the people of the latter are more homogenous in character, language and opinions, than those of any

other great nation that is familiarly known. This identity of character is owing to the early predominance of the English, and to the circumstance that New England and Virginia, the two great sources of internal emigration, were entirely of English origin. Still New York retains to the present hour a variety of usages that were obtained from Holland. Her edifices of painted bricks, her streets lined with trees, her inconvenient and awkward stoops, and a large proportion of her names, are equally derived from the Dutch. Until the commencement of this century, even the language of Holland prevailed in the streets of the capital; and though a nation of singular boldness and originality in all that relates to navigation, the greatest sea-port of the country betrays many evidences of a taste which must be referred to the same origin.

The reader will find in these facts a sufficient explanation of most of the peculiar customs, and of some of the peculiar practices that are exhibited in the course of the following tale. Slavery, a divided language, and a distinct peo-

ple, are no longer to be found within the fair regions of New York ; and, without pretending to any peculiar exemption from the weaknesses of humanity, it may be permitted us to hope that these are not the only features of the narrative which a better policy and a more equitable administration of power have made purely historical.

Early released from the fetters of the middle ages, fetters that bound the mind equally with the person, America has preceded rather than followed Europe in that march of improvement which is rendering the present era so remarkable. Under a system, broad, liberal and just as her's, though she may have to contend with rivalries that are sustained by a more concentrated competition, and which are as absurd by their pretension of liberality, as they are offensive by their monopolies, there is nothing to fear in the end. Her political motto should be Justice, and her first and greatest care to see it administered to her own citizens.

The reader is left to make the application.

THE WATER WITCH.

CHAPTER I.

“What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse ?
Or shall we on without apology ?”

Romeo and Juliet.

THE fine estuary which penetrates the American coast, between the fortieth and forty-first degrees of latitude, is formed by the confluence of the Hudson, the Hackensack, the Passaic, the Rariton, and a multitude of smaller streams ; all of which pour their tribute into the ocean, within the space named. The islands of Nas-

sau and Staten are happily placed to exclude the tempests of the open sea, while the deep and broad arms of the latter offer every desirable facility for foreign trade and internal intercourse. To this fortunate disposition of land and water, with a temperate climate, a central position, and an immense interior, that is now penetrated in every direction, either by artificial or by natural streams, the city of New York is indebted for its extraordinary prosperity. Though not wanting in beauty, there are many bays that surpass this in the charms of scenery; but it may be questioned if the world possesses another site that unites so many natural advantages for the growth and support of a widely extended commerce. As if never wearied with her kindness, Nature has placed the island of Manhattan at the precise point that is most desirable for the position of a town. Millions might inhabit the spot, and yet a ship should load near every door, and while the surface of the land just

possesses the inequalities that are required for health and cleanliness, its bosom is filled with the material most needed in construction.

The consequences of so unusual a concurrence of favourable circumstances are well known. A vigorous, healthful and continued growth, that has no parallel even in the history of this extraordinary and fortunate country, has already raised the insignificant provincial town, of the last century, to the level of the second-rate cities of the other hemisphere. The New-Amsterdam of this continent already rivals its parent of the other; and, so far as human powers may pretend to predict, a few fleeting years will place her on a level with the proudest capitals of Europe.

It would seem that, as Nature has given its periods to the stages of animal life, it has also set limits to all moral and political ascendancy. While the city of the Medici is receding from its crumbling walls, like the human form shrinking into "the lean and slippered pantaloon,"

the queen of the Adriatic sleeping on her muddy isles, and Rome itself is only to be traced by fallen temples and buried columns, the youthful vigour of America is fast covering the wilds of the west, with the happiest fruits of human industry.

By the Manhattanesse, who is familiar with the forest of masts, the miles of wharves, the countless villas, the hundred churches, the castles, the smoking and busy vessels that crowd his bay, the daily increase and the general movement of his native town, the picture we are about to sketch will scarcely be recognized. He who shall come a generation later will probably smile, that subject of admiration should have been found in the existing condition of the city: and yet we shall attempt to carry the recollections of the reader but a century back in the brief history of his country.

As the sun rose on the morning of the 3rd of June, 171—, the report of a cannon was heard rolling along the waters of the Hudson. Smoke

issued from an embrasure of a small fortress, that stood on the point of land where the river and the bay mingle their waters. The explosion was followed by the appearance of a flag, which, as it rose to the summit of its staff and unfolded itself heavily in the light current of air, shewed the blue field and red cross of the English ensign. At the distance of several miles, the dark masts of a ship were to be seen, faintly relieved by the verdant back-ground of the heights of Staten Island. A little cloud floated over this object, and then an answering signal came dull and rumbling to the town. The flag that the cruiser set was not visible in the distance.

At the precise moment that the noise of the first gun was heard, the door of one of the principal dwellings of the town opened, and a man, who might have been its master, appeared on its stoop, as the ill-arranged entrances of the buildings of the place are still termed. He was seemingly prepared for some expedition

that was likely to consume the day. A black, of middle age, followed the burgher to the threshold, and another negro, who had not yet reached the stature of manhood, bore under his arm a small bundle, that probably contained articles of the first necessity to the comfort of his master.

“Thrift, Mr. Euclid, thrift is your true philosopher’s stone;” commenced, or rather continued in a rich, full-mouthed Dutch the proprietor of the dwelling, who had evidently been giving a leave-taking charge to his principal slave, before quitting the house—“thrift hath made many a man rich, but it never yet brought any one to want. It is thrift which has built up the credit of my house; and, though it is said by myself, a broader back and firmer base belongs to no merchant in the colonies. You are but the reflection of your master’s prosperity, you rogue, and so much the greater need that you look to his interests. If the substance is wasted, what will become of the

shadow ! When I get delicate, you will sicken ; when I am a-hungered, you will be famished ; when I die, you may be—ahem—Euclid, I leave thee in charge of goods and chattels, house and stable, with my character in the neighbourhood. I am going to the Lust in Rust for a mouthful of better air. Plague and fevers ! I believe the people will continue to come into this crowded town until it gets to be as pestilent as Rotterdam in the dog-days. You have now come to years when a man obtains his reflection, boy, and I expect suitable care and discretion about the premises while my back is turned. Now, harkee, sirrah : I am not entirely pleased with the character of thy company. It is not altogether as respectable as becomes the confidential servant of a man of a certain station in the world. There are thy two cousins, Brom and Kobus, who are no better than a couple of blackguards ; and as for the English negro, Diomedé—he is a devil's imp ! 'Thou hast the other locks at disposal, and,"

drawing with visible reluctance the instrument from his pocket, "here is the key of the stable. Not a hoof is to quit it, but to go to the pump—and see that each animal has its food to a minute. The devil's roysterers! a Manhattan negro takes a Flemish gelding for a gaunt hound, that is never out of breath, and away he goes, at night, scampering along the highways like a yankee witch switching through the air on a broomstick; but mark me, Master Euclid, I have eyes in my head, as thou knowest by bitter experience! D'ye remember, rag-a-muffin, the time when I saw thee, from the Hague, riding the beasts, as if the devil spurred them, along the dykes of Leyden, without remorse as without leave?"

"I alway b'rieve some make-mischief tell Masser, dat time," returned the negro sulkily, though not without doubt.

"His own eyes were the tell-tales. If masters had no eyes, a pretty world would the negroes make of it! I have got the measure of

every black heel on the island registered in the big book you see me so often looking into, especially on Sundays; and, if either of the tire-legs I have named dares to enter my grounds, let him expect to pay a visit to the city Prevost. What do the wild cats mean! Do they think that the geldings were bought in Holland, with charges for breaking in, shipment, insurance, freight, and risk of diseases, to have their flesh melted from their ribs like a cook's candle?"

"Ere not'in' done in all 'e island, but a colour' man do him! He do a mischief, and he do all a work, too! I won'er what colour Masser t'ink war' Capt. Kidd?"

"Black or white, he was a rank rogue; and you see the end he came to. I warrant you, now, that water-thief began his iniquities by riding the neighbours' horses at night. His fate should be a warning to every negro in the colony. The imps of darkness! The English have no such scarcity of rogues at home, that

they could not spare us the pirate to hang up on one of the islands, as a scarecrow to the blacks of Manhattan."

"Well, I t'ink 'e sight do a white man some good, too," returned Euclid, who had all the pertinacity of a spoiled Dutch negro, singularly blended with affection for him in whose service he had been born. "I hear ebbery body say, 'ere war' but two colour' man in he ship, and 'em bot' war' Guinea born."

"A modest tongue, thou midnight scamperer! Look to my geldings.—Here—here are two Dutch florins, three stivers, and a Spanish pistoreen for thee; one of the florins is for thy old mother, and with the others, thou canst lighten thy heart in the Paus merry-makings.—If I hear that either of thy rascally cousins, or the English Diomedes, has put a leg across beast of mine, it will be the worse for all Africa! Famine and skeletons! here have I been seven years trying to fatten the nags, and they

still look more like weasels, than a pair of solid geldings."

The close of this speech was rather muttered in the distance, and by way of soliloquy, than actually administered to the namesake of the great mathematician. The air of the negro had been a little equivocal during the parting admonition. There was an evident struggle in his mind between an innate love of disobedience, and a secret dread of his master's means of information. So long as the latter continued in sight, the black watched his form in doubt, and when it had turned a corner, he stood at gaze, for a moment, with a negro on a neighbouring stoop; then both shook their heads significantly, laughed aloud, and retired. That night the confidential servant attended to the interests of his absent master with a fidelity and care which proved he felt his own existence identified with that of a man who claimed so close a right in his person; and just as the clock struck ten, he and the negro

last mentioned mounted the sluggish and over-fattened horses, and galloped, as hard as foot could be laid to the earth, several miles deeper into the island, to attend a frolic at one of the usual haunts of the people of their colour and condition.

Had Alderman Myndert Van Beverout suspected the calamity which was so soon to succeed his absence, it is probable that his mien would have been less composed, as he pursued his way from his own door on the occasion named. That he had confidence in the virtue of his menaces, however, may be inferred from the tranquillity which immediately took possession of features that were never disturbed without wearing an appearance of unnatural effort. The substantial burgher was a little turned of fifty; and an English wag, who had imported from the mother country a love for the humour of his nation, had once, in a conflict of wits before the city council, described him to be a man of alliterations. When called

upon to explain away this breach of parliamentary decorum, the punster had gotten rid of the matter, by describing his opponent to be "short, solid and sturdy in stature; full, flushed and funny in face; and proud, ponderous and pragmatistical in propensities." But, as is usual, in all sayings of effort, there was more smartness than truth in this description; though after making a trifling allowance for the colouring of political rivalry, the reader may receive its physical portion, as sufficiently descriptive to answer all the necessary purposes of this tale. If we add that he was a trader of great wealth and shrewdness, and a bachelor, we need say no more in this stage of the narrative.

Notwithstanding the early hour at which this industrious and flourishing merchant quitted his abode, his movement along the narrow streets of his native town was measured and dignified. More than once, he stopped to speak to some favourite family servant, invariably terminating his inquiries after the health of the master, by

some facetious observation adapted to the habits and capacity of the slave. From this it would seem, that, while he had so exaggerated notions of domestic discipline, the worthy burgher was far from being one who indulged by inclination in the menaces he has been heard to utter. He had just dismissed one of these loitering negroes, when, on turning a corner, a man of his own colour, for the first time that morning, suddenly stood before him. The startled citizen made an involuntary movement to avoid the unexpected interview, and then, perceiving the difficulty of such a step, he submitted with as good a grace as if it had been one of his own seeking.

“The orb of day—the morning gun—and Mr. Alderman Van Beverout!” exclaimed the individual encountered. “Such is the order of events, at this early hour, on each successive revolution of our earth.”

The countenance of the Alderman had barely time to recover its composure, ere he was

required to answer to this free and somewhat facetious salutation. Uncovering his head, he bowed so ceremoniously as to leave the other no reason to exult in his pleasantry, as he answered—

“The colony has reason to regret the services of a governor who can quit his bed so soon. That we of business habits stir betimes, is quite in reason, but there are those in this town, who would scarce believe their eyes did they enjoy my present happiness.”

“Sir, there are many in this colony who have great reason to distrust their senses, though none can be mistaken in believing they see Alderman Van Beverout in a well employed man. He that dealeth in the produce of the beaver must have the animal’s perseverance and forethought! Now, were I a king at arms, there should be a concession made in thy favour, Myndert, of a shield bearing the animal mordant, a mantle of fur, with two Mohawk hunters for supporters, and the motto, ‘Industry.’”

“ Or what think you, my Lord,” returned the other, who did not more than half relish the pleasantry of his companion, “ of a spotless shield for a clear conscience, with an open hand for a crest, and the motto, ‘ Frugality and Justice?’ ”

“ I like the open hand, though the conceit is pretending. I see you would intimate that the Van Beverouts have not need, at this late day, to search a herald’s office for honours. I remember, now I bethink me, on some occasion to have seen their bearings; a windmill, courant—dyke, coulant—field, vert, sprinkled with black cattle—No! then, memory is treacherous; the morning air is pregnant with food for the imagination!”

“ Which is not a coin to satisfy a creditor, my Lord,” said the caustic Myndert.

“ Therein has truth been pithily spoken. This is an ill-judged step, Alderman Van Beverout, that lets a gentleman out by night, like the ghost in Hamlet, to flee into the narrow

house with the crowing of the cock. The ear of my royal cousin hath been poisoned, worse than was the ear of 'murdered Denmark,' or the partisans of this Mister Hunter would have little cause to triumph."

"Is it not possible to give such pledges to those who have turned the key, as will enable your lordship to apply the antidote?"

The question struck a chord that changed the whole manner of the other. His air, which had borne the character of a genteel trifler, became more grave and dignified, and notwithstanding there was the evidence of a reckless disposition in his features, dress and carriage, his tall and not ungraceful form, as he walked slowly onward by the side of the compact Alderman, was not without much of that insinuating ease and blandishment, that long familiarity with good company can give even to the lowest moral worth.

"Your question, worthy Sir, manifests great goodness of heart, and corroborates that repu-

tation for generosity the world so freely gives. It is true that the Queen has been persuaded to sign the mandate of my recal, and it is certain that Mr. Hunter has the government of the colony; but these are facts that might be reversed, were I once in a position to approach my kinswoman. I do not disclaim certain indiscretions, Sir; it would ill become me to deny them in presence of one whose virtue is as severe as that of Alderman Van Beverout. I have my failings: perhaps, as you have just been pleased to intimate, it would have been better had my motto been frugality; but the open hand, dear Sir, is a part of the design you will not deny me either. If I have weaknesses, my enemies cannot refuse to say that I never yet deserted a friend."

"Not having had occasion to tax your friendship, I shall not be the first to make the charge."

"Your impartiality has come to be a proverb! 'As honest as Alderman Van Beverout;'

‘ as generous as Alderman Van Beverout,’ are terms in each man’s mouth ; some say ‘ as rich ;’ (the small blue eye of the burgher twinkled). But honesty, and riches, and generosity are of little value, without influence. Men should have their natural consideration in society. Now is this colony rather Dutch than English, and yet you see how few names are found in the list of the council that have been known in the province half a century ! Here are your Alexanders and Heathcotes, your Morrises and Kennedies, De Lanceys and Livingstones, filling the council, and the legislative halls ; but we find few of the Van Rensselaers, Van Courtlandts, Van Schuylers, Stuyvesants, Van Beckmans and Van Beverouts in their natural stations. All nations and religions have precedence, in the royal favour, over the children of the patriarchs. The Bohemian Felipses, the Huguenot de Lanceys, and Bayards, and Jays ; the king-hating Morrisses and Ludlows—in

short, all have greater estimation in the eyes of government, than the most ancient Patroon !”

“ This has long and truly been the case ; I cannot remember when it was otherwise !”

“ It may not be denied. But it would little become political discretion to affect precipitancy in the judgment of character. If my own administration can be stigmatized with the same apparent prejudice, it proves the clearer how strong is misrepresentation at home. Time was wanting to enlighten my mind, and that time has been refused me. In another year, my worthy Sir, the council should have been filled with Vans !”

“ In such a case, my Lord, the unhappy condition in which you are now placed might indeed have been avoided.”

“ Is it too late to arrest the evil ? It is time Anne had been undeceived, and her mind regained. There wanteth nothing to such a consummation of justice, Sir, but opportunity. It

touches me to the heart, to think that this disgrace should befall one so near the royal blood ! 'Tis a spot on the escutcheon of the crown, that all loyal subjects must feel desirous to efface ; and so small an effort would effect the object, too, with certain—Mr. Alderman Myndert Van Beverout—?”

“ My Lord, late Governor,” returned the other, observing that his companion hesitated.

“ What think you of this Hanoverian settlement ?—Shall a German wear the crown of a Plantagenet ?”

“ It hath been worn by a Hollander.”

“ Aptly answered ! Worn, and worn worthily ! There is affinity between the people, and there is reason in that reply. How have I failed in wisdom, in not seeking earlier the aid of thy advice, excellent Sir ! Ah, Myndert, there is a blessing on the enterprises of all who come of the Low Countries !”

“ They are industrious to earn, and slow to squander.”

“ That expenditure is the ruin of many a worthy subject ! And yet accident—chance—fortune—or whatever you may choose to call it, interferes nefariously, at times, with a gentleman’s prosperity. I am an adorer of constancy in friendships, Sir, and hold the principle that men should aid each other through this dark vale of life—Mr. Alderman Van Beverout—”

“ My Lord Cornbury ?”

“ I was about to say, that should I quit the province, without expressing part of the regret I feel at not having sooner ascertained the merits of its original owners, and your own in particular, I should do injustice to sensibilities that are only too acute for the peace of him who endures them.”

“ Is there then hope that your Lordship’s creditors will relent, or has the earl furnished means to open the prison door ?”

“ You use the pleasantest terms, Sir !—but I love directness of language above all other qua-

lities. No doubt the prison door, as you have so clearly expressed it, might be opened, and lucky would be the man who should turn the key. I am pained when I think of the displeasure of the queen, which, sooner or later, will surely visit my luckless persecutors. On the other hand, I find relief in thinking of the favour she will extend to those who have proved my friends in such a strait. They that wear crowns love not to see disgrace befall the meanest of their blood, for something of the taint may sully even the ermine of majesty.—Mr. Alderman—”

“ My Lord ? ”

“ —How fare the Flemish geldings ? ”

“ Bravely, and many thanks, my Lord ; the rogues are fat as butter ! There is hope of a little rest for the innocents, since business calls me to the Lust in Rust. There should be a law, Lord Governor, to gibbet the black that rides a beast at night.”

“ I bethought me of some condign punish-

ment for so heartless a crime, but there is little hope for it under the administration of this Mr. Hunter. Yes, Sir; were I once more in the presence of my royal cousin, there would quickly be an end to this delusion, and the colony should be once more restored to a healthful state. The men of a generation should cease to lord it over the men of a century. But we must be wary of letting our design, my dear Sir, get wind; it is a truly Dutch idea, and the profits, both pecuniary and political, should belong to the gentlemen of that descent—My dear Van Beverout—”

“ My good Lord ? ”

“ Is the blooming Alida obedient ? Trust me, there has no family event occurred, during my residence in the colony, in which I have taken a nearer interest than in that desirable connexion. The wooing of the young Patroon of Kinderhook is an affair of concern to the province. It is a meritorious youth ! ”

“ With an excellent estate, my Lord ! ”

“ And a gravity beyond his years.”

“ I would give a guaranty, at a risk, that two-thirds of his income goes to increase the capital, at the beginning of each season !”

“ He seems a man to live on air !”

“ My old friend, the last Patroon, left noble assets,” continued the Alderman, rubbing his hands, “ besides the manor.”

“ Which is no paddock.”

“ It reaches from the Hudson to the line of Massachusetts. A hundred thousand acres of hill and bottom, and well peopled by frugal Hollanders.”

“ Respectable in possession, and a mine of gold in reversion ! Such men, Sir, should be cherished. We owe it to his station to admit him to a share of this our project to undeceive the Queen. How superior are the claims of such a gentleman to the empty pretensions of your Captain Ludlow !”

“ He has truly a very good and an improving estate !”

“ These Ludlows, Sir, people that fled the realm for plotting against the crown, are offensive to a loyal subject. Indeed, too much of this objection may be imputed to many in the province, that come of English blood. I am sorry to say, that they are fomenters of discord, disturbers of the public mind, and captious disputants about prerogatives and vested rights. But there is a repose in the Dutch character which lends it dignity! The descendants of the Hollanders are men to be counted on; where we leave them to-day, we see them to-morrow. As we say in politics, Sir, we know where to find them. Does it not seem to you particularly offensive that this Captain Ludlow should command the only royal cruiser on the station?”

“ I should like it better, my Lord, were he to serve in Europe,” returned the Alderman, glancing a look behind him, and lowering his voice. “ There was lately a rumour that his ship was in truth to be sent among the islands.”

“Matters are getting very wrong, most worthy Sir, and the greater the necessity there should be one at court to undeceive the Queen. Innovators should be made to give way to men whose names are historical in the colony.”

“’Twould be no worse for her Majesty’s credit.”

“’Twould be another jewel in her crown! Should this Captain Ludlow actually marry your niece, the family would altogether change its character—I have the worst memory—thy mother, Myndert, was a—a—”

“The pious woman was a Van Busser.”

“The union of thy sister with the Huguenot then reduces the fair Alida to the quality of a half-blood. The Ludlow connexion would destroy the leaven of the race! I think the man is pennyless!”

“I cannot say that, my Lord, for I would not willingly injure the credit of my worst enemy; but though wealthy, he is far from

having the estate of the young Patroon of Kinderhook."

"He should indeed be sent into the Indies.— Myndert—"

"My Lord?"

"It would be unjust to my sentiments in favour of Mr. Oloff Van Staats were we to exclude him from the advantages of our project. This much shall I exact from your friendship in his favour; the necessary sum may be divided in moieties between you, a common bond shall render the affair compact, and then, as we shall be masters of our own secret, there can be little doubt of the prudence of our measures. The amount is written in this bit of paper."

"Two thousand pounds, my Lord!"

"Pardon me, dear Sir; not a penny more than one for each of you. Justice to Van Staats requires that you let him into the affair. Were it not for the suit with your niece, I

should take the young gentleman with me, to push his fortunes at court."

"Truly, my Lord, this greatly exceeds my means. The high prices of furs the past season, and delays in returns, have placed a seal upon our silver—"

"The premium would be high."

"Coin is getting so scarce, daily, that the face of a Carolus is almost as great a stranger as the face of a debtor—"

"The returns certain."

"While one's creditors meet him at every corner—"

"The concern would be altogether Dutch."

"And last advices from Holland tell us to reserve our gold for some extraordinary movements in the commercial world."

"Mr. Alderman Myndert Van Beverout!"

"My Lord Viscount Cornbury?"

"Plutus preserve thee, Sir—but have a care! though I scent the morning air, and must return, it is not forbid to tell the secrets of

my prison-house. There is one, in yonder cage, who whispers that the 'Skimmer of the Seas' is on the coast! Be wary, worthy burgher, or the second part of the tragedy of Kidd may yet be enacted in these seas."

"I leave such transactions to my superiors," retorted the Alderman, with another stiff and ceremonious bow. "Enterprises that are said to have occupied the Earl of Bellamont, Governor Fletcher, and my Lord Cornbury, are above the ambition of a humble merchant."

"Adieu, tenacious Sir; quiet thine impatience for the extraordinary Dutch movements!" said Cornbury, affecting to laugh, though he secretly felt the sting the other had applied, since common report implicated not only him, but his two official predecessors, in several of the lawless proceedings of the American buccaneers: "Be vigilant, or la Demoiselle Barbérie will give another cross to the purity of the stagnant pool!"

The bows that were exchanged were strictly

in character. The Alderman was unmoved, rigid and formal, while his companion could not forget his ease of manner, even at a moment of so much vexation. Foiled in an effort that nothing but his desperate condition and nearly desperate character could have induced him to attempt, the degenerate descendant of the virtuous Clarendon walked towards his place of confinement, with the step of one who assumed a superiority over his fellows, and yet with a mind so indurated by habitual depravity, as to have left it scarcely the trace of a dignified or virtuous quality.

CHAPTER II.

“ His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles ;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate.”

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

THE philosophy of Alderman Van Beverout was not easily disturbed. Still there was a play of the nether muscles of the face, which might be construed into self complacency at his victory, while a certain contraction of those which controlled the expression of the forehead seemed to betray a full consciousness of the eminent risk he had run. The left hand was thrust into a pocket, where it dili-

gently fingered the provision of Spanish coin without which the merchant never left his abode, while the other struck the cane it held on the pavement, with the force of a resolute and decided man. In this manner he proceeded in his walk for several minutes longer, shortly quitting the lower streets, to enter one that ran along the ridge which crowned the land in that quarter of the island. Here he soon stopped before the door of a house which, in that provincial town, had altogether the air of a patrician dwelling.

Two false gables, each surmounted by an iron weathercock, intersected the roof of this building, and the high and narrow stoop was built of the red free-stone of the country. The material of the edifice itself, was, as usual, the small hard brick of Holland, painted a delicate cream colour.

A single blow of the massive glittering knocker brought a servant to the door. The promptitude with which this summons was

answered, showed that, notwithstanding the early hour, the Alderman was an expected guest. The countenance of him who acted as porter betrayed no surprise when he saw the person who applied for admission, and every movement of the black denoted preparation and readiness for his reception. Declining his invitation to enter, however, the Alderman placed his back against the iron railing of the stoop, and opened a discourse with the negro. The latter was aged, with a head that was grizzled, a nose that was levelled nearly to the plane of his face, features that were wrinkled and confused, and with a form which, though still solid, was bending with its load of years.

“ Brave cheer to thee, old Cupid ! ” commenced the burgher, in the hearty and cordial manner with which the masters of that period were wont to address their indulged slaves. “ A clear conscience is a good night-cap, and you look bright as the morning sun ! I hope my friend the young Patroon has slept sound

as yourself, and that he has shewn his face already, to prove it."

The negro answered with the slow clipping manner that characterized his condition and years.

"He'm werry wakeful, Masser Al'erman. I t'ink he no sleep half he time, lately. All he a'tiverty and wiwacerty gone, an' he do no single ting but smoke. A gentle'um who smoke alway, Masser Al'erman, get to be a melercholy man, at last. I do t'ink 'ere be one young lady in York who be he deat', some time!"

"We'll find the means to get the pipe out of his mouth," said the other, looking askance at the black, as if to express more than he uttered. "Romance and pretty girls play the deuce with our philosophy, in youth, as thou knowest by experience, old Cupid."

"I no good for any ting dat-a-way, now, not'ing," calmly returned the black. "I see a one time, when few colour' man in York hab more respect among a fair sec, but dat a

great while gone by. Now, de modder of your Euclid, Masser Al'erman, war a pretty woman, do' she hab but poor conduc'. Den a war young heself, and I use to visit at de Al'erman's fadder's, afore a English come, and when ole Patroon war a young man. Golly! I great affection for Euclid, do' a young dog nebber come a near me!"

"He's a blackguard! My back is no sooner turned than the rascal's a-top of one of his master's geldings."

"He'm werry young, Masser My'nert: no one get a wis'om 'fore a grey hair."

"He's forty every minute, and the rogue gets impudence with his years. Age is a reverend and respectable condition, when it brings gravity and thought; but if a young fool be tiresome, an old fool is contemptible. I'll warrant me, you never were so thoughtless, or so heartless, Cupid, as to ride an overworked beast at night!"

"Well, I get pretty ole, Masser Myn'ert,

an' I forget all he do when a young man. But here be 'e Patroon, who know how to tell 'e Aler'man such t'ing better than a poor colour' slave."

"A fair rising and a lucky day to you, Patroon!" cried the Alderman, saluting a large, slow-moving, gentlemanly looking young man of five-and-twenty, who advanced with the gravity of one of twice that number of years, from the interior of the house towards its outer door. "The winds are bespoken, and here is as fine a day as ever shone out of a clear sky, whether it came from the pure atmosphere of Holland, or of old England itself. Colonies and patronage! If the people on the other side of the ocean had more faith in mother nature, and less opinion of themselves, they would find it very tolerable breathing in the plantations. But the conceited rogues are like the man who blew the bellows, and fancied he made the music; and there is never a hobbling imp of them all, but

he believes he is straighter and sounder than the best in the colonies. Here is our bay, now, as smooth as if it were shut in with twenty dykes, and the voyage will be as safe as if it were made on a canal."

"Dat werry well if a do it," grumbled Cupid, who busied himself affectionately about the person of his master. "I t'ink it alway better to travel on e' land, when a gentle'um own so much as Masser Oloff. Der' war 'e time a ferry boat go down, wid crowd of people; and nobody ebber come up again to say how he feel."

"Here is some mistake!" interrupted the Alderman, throwing an uneasy glance at his young friend. "I count four and fifty years, and remember no such calamity."

"He'm werry sing'lar how a young folk do forget! 'Ere war drown six people in dat werry boat. A two Yankee, a Canada Frenchman, and a poor woman from a Jarseys. Ebbery body war werry sorry for a poor woman from a Jarseys!"

“Thy tally is false, Master Cupid,” promptly rejoined the Alderman, who was rather expert at figures. “Two Yankees, a Frenchman and your Jersey woman, make but four.”

“Well, den I s’pose ’ere war one Yankee ; but I know all war’ drown, for’ e gubbenor lose he fine coach horses in dat werry boat.”

“The old fellow is right, sure enough, for I remember the calamity of the horses, as if it were but yesterday. But death is monarch of the earth, and none of us may hope to escape his scythe, when the appointed hour shall come ! Here are no nags to lose to-day, and we may commence our voyage, Patroon, with cheerful faces and light hearts. Shall we proceed ?”

Oloff Van Staats, or the Patroon of Kinderhook, as, by the courtesy of the colony, he was commonly termed, did not want for personal firmness. On the contrary, like most of those who were descended from the Hollanders, he was rather distinguished for steadiness in danger, and obstinacy in resistance. The little

skirmish which had just taken place, between his friend and his slave, had proceeded from their several apprehensions, the one feeling a sort of parental interest in his safety, and the other having particular reasons for wishing him to persevere in his intention to embark, instead of any justifiable cause in the character of the young proprietor himself. A sign to the boy who bore a portmanteau, settled the controversy, and then Mr. Van Staats intimated his readiness to move.

Cupid lingered on the stoop until his master had turned a corner; then shaking his head with all the misgivings of an ignorant and superstitious mind, he drove the young fry of blacks, who thronged the door, into the house, closing all after him with singular and scrupulous care. How far the presentiment of the black was warranted by the event, will be seen in the course of the narrative.

The wide avenue in which Oloff Van Staats dwelt, was but a few hundred yards in length.

It terminated at one end with the fortress, and at the other it was crossed by a high stockade, which bore the name of the city walls; a defence that was provided against any sudden irruption of the Indians, who then hunted and even dwelt in some numbers in the lower counties of the colony.

It requires great familiarity with the growth of the town, to recognize, in this description, the noble street that now runs for a league through the centre of the island. From this avenue, which was then, as it is still, called the Broadway, our adventurers descended into a lower quarter of the town, holding free converse by the way.

“That Cupid is a negro to keep the roof on a house in its master’s absence, Patroon,” observed the Alderman, soon after they had left the stoop. “He looks like a padlock, and one might sleep, without a dream, with such a guardian near his dwelling. I wish I had brought the honest fellow the key of my stable!”

“ I have heard my father say, that the keys of his own were always better near his own pillow,” coolly returned the proprietor of a hundred thousand acres.

“ Ah, the curse of Cain ! it is needless to look for the fur of a marten on the back of a cat. But, Mr. Van Staats, while walking to your door this morning, it was my fortune to meet the late Governor, who is permitted by his creditors to take the air, at an hour when he thinks the eyes of the impertinent will be shut. I believe, Patroon, you were so lucky as to get back your monies, before the royal displeasure visited the man ?”

“ I was so lucky as never to trust him.”

“ That was better still, for it would have been a barren investment ; great jeopardy to principal, and no return. But we had discourse of various interests, and among others, something was hazarded concerning your amatory pretensions to my niece.”

“Neither the wishes of Oloff Van Staats, nor the inclinations of la Belle Barbérie are a subject for the Governor in Council,” said the Patron of Kinderhook stiffly.

“Nor was it thus treated. The Viscount spoke me fair, and had he not pushed the matter beyond discretion, we might have come to happier conclusions.”

“I am glad that there was some restraint in the discourse.”

“The man certainly exceeded reason, for he led the conference into personalities that no prudent man could relish. Still he said it was possible that the Coquette might yet be ordered for service among the islands !”

It has been said that Oloff Van Staats was a fair personable young man of vast stature, and with much of the air of a gentleman of his country ; for though a British subject, he was rather a Hollander in feelings, habits, and opinions. He coloured at the allusion to the presence of his known rival, though his com-

panion was at a loss to discover whether pride or vexation was at the bottom of his emotion.

“ If Captain Ludlow prefer a cruise in the Indies to duty on this coast, I hope he may obtain his wish,” was the cautious answer.

“ Your liberal man enjoys a sounding name, and an empty coffer,” observed the Alderman drily. “ To me it seems that a petition to the admiral to send so meritorious an officer on service where he may distinguish himself, should deserve his thanks. The freebooters are playing the devil’s game with the sugar trade, and even the French are getting troublesome, further south.”

“ He has certainly the reputation of an active cruiser.”

“ Blixum and Philosophy ! If you wish to succeed with Alida, Patroon, you must put more briskness into the adventure. The girl has a cross of the Frenchman in her temper, and none of your deliberations and taciturnities will gain the day. This visit to the Lust in Rust

is Cupid's own handy work, and I hope to see you both return to town as amicable as the Stadtholder and the States General after a sharp struggle for the year's subsidy has been settled by a compromise."

"The success of this suit is the affair nearest my—" The young man paused, as if surprised at his own communicativeness, and taking advantage of the haste in which his toilette had been made, he thrust a hand into his vest, covering with his broad palm a portion of the human frame which poets do not describe as the seat of the passions.

"If you mean stomach, Sir, you will not have reason to be disappointed," retorted the Alderman, a little more severely than was usual with one so cautious. "The heiress of Myn-dert Van Beverout will not be a pennyless bride, and Monsieur Barbérie did not close the books of life without taking good care of the balance sheet—but yonder are those devils of ferrymen quitting the wharf without us! Scamper ahead,

Brutus, and tell them to wait the legal minute. The rogues are never exact ; sometimes starting before I am ready, and sometimes keeping me waiting in the sun, as if I were no better than a dried dun-fish. Punctuality is the soul of business, and one of my habits does not like to be ahead nor behind his time."

In this manner the worthy burgher, who would have been glad to regulate the movements of others on all occasions a good deal by his own, vented his complaints, while he and his companion hurried on to overtake the slow-moving boat in which they were to embark. A brief description of the scene will not be without interest to a generation that may be termed modern, in reference to the time of which we write.

A deep narrow creek penetrated the island at this point for the distance of a quarter of a mile. Each of its banks had a row of buildings, as the houses line a canal in the cities of Holland. As the natural course of the inlet was neces-

sarily respected, the street had taken a curvature not unlike that of a new moon. The houses were ultra Dutch, being low, angular, fastidiously neat, and all erected with their gables to the street. Each had its ugly and inconvenient entrance termed a stoop; its vane or weathercock, its dormer windows, and its graduated battlement walls. Near the apex of one of the latter, a little iron crane projected into the street. A small boat, of the same metal, swung from its end, a sign that the building to which it was appended was the ferry-house.

An inherent love of artificial and confined navigation had probably induced the burghers to select this spot as the place whence so many craft departed from the town, since it is certain that the two rivers could have furnished divers points more favourable for such an object, inasmuch as they possess the advantage of wide and unobstructed channels.

Fifty blacks were already in the street, dipping their brooms into the creek, and flourish-

ing water over the side walks, and on the fronts of the low edifices. This light but daily duty was relieved by clamorous collisions of wit, and by shouts of merriment, in which the whole street would join, as with one joyous and reckless movement of the spirit.

The language of this light-hearted and noisy race was Dutch, already corrupted by English idioms, and occasionally by English words; a system of change that has probably given rise to an opinion, among some of the descendants of the earlier colonists, that the latter tongue is merely a patois of the former. This opinion, which so much resembles that certain well read English scholars entertain of the plagiarisms of the continental writers, when they first begin to dip into their works, is not strictly true, since the language of England has probably bestowed as much on the dialect of which we speak, as it has ever received from the purer sources of the school of Holland. Here and there a grave burgher, still in his night-cap, might be seen

with a head thrust out of an upper window, listening to these barbarisms of speech, and taking note of all the merry jibes that flew from mouth to mouth with an indomitable gravity that no levity of those beneath could undermine.

As the movement of the ferry boat was necessarily slow, the Alderman and his companion were enabled to step into it, before the fests were thrown aboard. The periagua, as the craft was called, partook of an European and an American character. It possessed the length, narrowness, and clean bow of the canoe, from which its name was derived, with the flat bottom and lee-boards of a boat constructed for the shallow waters of the Low Countries. Twenty years ago, vessels of this description abounded in our rivers, and even now their two long and unsupported masts, and high narrow-headed sails, are daily seen bending like reeds to the breeze, and dancing lightly over the billows of the bay. There is a

variety of the class, of a size and pretension altogether superior to that just mentioned, which deserves a place among the most picturesque and striking boats that float. He who has had occasion to navigate the southern shore of the Sound, must have often seen the vessel to which we allude. It is distinguished by its great length, and masts which, naked of cordage, rise from the hull like two tall and faultless trees. When the eye runs over the daring height of canvas, the noble confidence of the rig, and sees the comparatively vast machine handled with ease and grace by the dexterity of two fearless and expert mariners, it excites some such admiration as that which springs from the view of a severe temple of antiquity. The nakedness and simplicity of the construction, coupled with the boldness and rapidity of its movements, imparts to the craft an air of grandeur that its ordinary uses would not give reason to expect.

Though, in some respects, of singularly aqua-

tic habits, the original colonists of New York were far less adventurous as mariners than their present descendants. A passage across the bay did not often occur in the tranquil lives of the burghers; and it is still within the memory of man, that a voyage between the two principal towns of the state was an event to excite the solicitude of friends, and the anxiety of the traveller. The perils of the Tappaan Zee, as one of the wider reaches of the Hudson is still termed, was often dealt with by the good wives of the colony, in their relations of marvels, and she who had oftenest encountered them unharmed, was deemed a sort of marine Amazon.

CHAPTER III.

“I have great comfort from this fellow : methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him ; his complexion is perfect gallows.”

Tempest.

It has been said that the periagua was in motion before our two adventurers succeeded in stepping on board. The arrival of the Patron of Kinderhook and of Alderman Van Beverout was expected, and the schipper had taken his departure at the precise moment of the turn in the current, in order to show, with a sort of pretending independence which has a peculiar charm for men in his situation, that ‘time and tide wait for no man.’ Still there

were limits to his decision, for while he put the boat in motion, especial care was taken that the circumstance should not subject a customer as important and constant as the Alderman, to any serious inconvenience. When he and his friend had embarked, the painters were thrown aboard, and the crew of the ferry-boat began to set their vessel in earnest towards the mouth of the creek. During these movements a young negro was seated in the bow of the periagua, with his legs dangling, one on each side of the cut-water, forming no bad apology for a figure head. He held a conch to his mouth, and with his two glossy cheeks inflated like those of *Æolus*, and his dark glittering eyes expressing the delight he found in drawing sounds from the shell, he continued to give forth the signal for departure.

“Put up the conch, thou bawler!” cried the Alderman, giving the youngster a rap on his naked poll in passing, with the end of his cane, that might have disturbed the harmony of one

less bent on clamour. "A thousand windy trumpeters would be silence itself, compared to such a pair of lungs! How now, Master Schipper, is this your punctuality, to start before your passengers are ready?"

The undisturbed boatman, without removing the pipe from his mouth, pointed to the bubbles on the water, which were already floating outward, a certain evidence that the tide was on the ebb.

"I care nothing for your ins and outs, your ebbs and floods," returned the Alderman in heat. "There is no better time-piece than the leg and eye of a punctual man. It is no more pleasant to go before one is ready, than to tarry when all business is done. Harkee, Master Schipper, you are not the only navigator in this bay, nor is your craft the swiftest that was ever launched. Have a care; though an acquiescing man by nature, I know how to encourage an opposition when the public good seriously calls for my support."

To the attack on himself, the schipper was stoically indifferent, but to impeach the qualities of the periagua was to attack one who depended solely on his eloquence for vindication. Removing his pipe, therefore, he rejoined on the Alderman, with that sort of freedom that the sturdy Hollanders never failed to use to all offenders, regardless alike of rank, or personal qualities.

“Der wind-gall and Alderman !” he growled in the dialect of the country ; “ I should be glad to see the boat in York bay that can show the Milk-Maid her stern ! The mayor and council-men had better order the tide to turn when they please, and then, as each man will think of his own pleasure, a pretty set of whirlpools they will give us in the harbour.”

The schipper having delivered himself of his sentiments to this effect, resumed his pipe, like a man who felt he deserved the meed of victory, whether he were to receive it or not.

“It is useless to dispute with an obstinate man,” muttered the Alderman, making his way through vegetable baskets, butter-tubs and all the garniture of a market boat, to the place occupied by his niece, in the stern sheets. “Good morrow to thee, Alida dear; early rising will make a flower garden of thy cheeks, and the fresh air of the Lust in Rust will give even thy roses a deeper bloom.”

The mollified burgher then saluted the cheek, whose bloom had been deepened by his remark, with a warmth that showed he was not without natural affection, touched his hat in return for a low bow that he received from an aged white man servant, in a clean but ancient livery, and nodded to a young negress, whose second-hand finery sufficiently shewed she was a personal attendant of the heiress.

A second glance at Alida de Barbérie was scarcely necessary to betray her mixed descent. From her Norman father, a Huguenot of the petite noblesse, she had inherited her raven

hair, the large brilliant coal-black eyes, in which wildness was singularly relieved by sweetness, a classical and faultless profile, and a form which was both taller and more flexible than commonly fell to the lot of the damsels of Holland. From her mother, la Belle Barbérie, as the maiden was often playfully termed, had received a skin, fair and spotless as the flower of France, and a bloom which rivalled the rich tints of an evening sky in her native land. Some of the *em bon point*, for which the sister of the Alderman had been a little remarkable, had descended also to her fairer daughter. In Alida, however, this peculiarity did not exceed the fulness which became her years, rounding her person and softening the outlines of her form, rather than diminishing its ease and grace. These personal advantages were embellished by a neat but modest travelling habit, a little beaver, that was shaded by a cluster of drooping feathers, and a mien that, under the embarrassment of her situation,

preserved the happiest medium between modesty and perfect self-possession.

When Alderman Van Beverout joined this fair creature, in whose future happiness he was fully justified in taking the deep interest which he has betrayed in some of the opening scenes of this volume, he found her engaged in a courteous discourse with the young man who was generally considered as the one among the numerous pretenders to her favour who was most likely to succeed. Had other cause been wanting, this sight alone would have been sufficient to restore his good humour, and making a place for himself, by quietly dispossessing François, the domestic of his niece, the persevering burgher endeavoured to encourage an intercourse, that he had reason to think must terminate in the result he both meditated and desired.

In the present effort, however, the Alderman failed. There is a feeling which universally pervades landmen and landswomen, when they

first embark on an element to which they are strangers, that ordinarily shuts their mouths and renders them meditative. In the older and more observant travellers it is observation and comparison, while with the younger and more susceptible it is very apt to take the character of sentiment. Without stopping to analyse the cause, or the consequences, in the instance of the *Patroon* and *la Belle Barbérie*, it will be sufficient to state, that in spite of all the efforts of the worthy burgher, who had navigated the sluggish creek too often to be the subject of any new emotions, his youthful companions gradually grew silent and thoughtful. Though a celibite in his own person, Myndert had not now to learn that the infant god as often does his mischief through this quiet agency, as in any other manner. He became, therefore, mute in his turn, watching the slow movement of the *periagua* with as much assiduity as if he saw his own image on the water.

A quarter of an hour of this characteristic,

and it is to be inferred agreeable navigation, brought the boat to the mouth of the inlet. Here a powerful effort forced her into the tide's-way, and she might be said to put forth on her voyage. But while the black crew were trimming the sails, and making the other necessary preparations for departure, a voice was heard hailing them from the shore, with an order, rather than a request, that they would stay their movements.

“Hilloa, the periagua!” it cried. “Haul over your head-sheet, and jam the tiller down into the lap of that comfortably-looking old gentleman. Come; bear a hand, my hummers! or your race-horse of a craft will get the bit into its mouth, and run away with you.”

This summons produced a pause in the movements of the crew. After regarding each other in surprise and admiration, the watermen drew the head sheet over, put the helm a-lee, without however invading the lap of the Alderman, and the boat became stationary at the distance of a

few rods from the shore. While the new passenger was preparing to come off in a yawl, those who awaited his movements had leisure to examine his appearance, and to form their different surmises concerning his character.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the stranger was a son of the ocean. He was of a firmly knit and active frame, standing exactly six feet in his stockings. The shoulders, though square, were compact, the chest full and high, the limbs round, neat, and muscular, the whole indicating a form in which strength and activity were apportioned with the greatest accuracy. A small bullet head was set firmly on its broad foundation, and it was thickly covered with a mass of brown hair that was already a little grizzled. The face was that of a man of thirty, and it was worthy of the frame, being manly, bold, decided, and rather handsome; though it expressed little more than high daring, perfect coolness, some obstinacy, and a certain degree of contempt for others, that its

owner did not always take the trouble to conceal. The colour was a rich, deep and uniform red, such as much exposure is apt to give to men whose complexions are, by nature, light and florid.

The dress of the stranger was quite as remarkable as his person. He wore a short peejacket, cut tight and tastefully; a little low and rakish cap, and full bell-mouthed trousers, all in a spotlessly white duck; a material well adapted to the season and the climate. The first was made without buttons, affording an apology for the use of a rich Indian shawl, that belted his body and kept the garment tight to his frame. Faultlessly clean linen appeared through the opening above, and a collar, of the same material, fell over the gay bandanna, which was thrown, with a single careless turn, around his throat. The latter was a manufacture then little known in Europe, and its use was almost entirely confined to seamen of the long voyage. One of its ends was suffered to

blow about in the wind, but the other was brought down with care over the chest, where it was confined, by springing the blade of a small knife with an ivory handle, in a manner to confine the silk to the linen; a sort of breast pin that is even now much used by mariners. If we add that light canvass slippers, with foul-anchors worked in worsted upon their insteps, covered his feet, we shall say all that is necessary of his attire.

The appearance of one of the air and dress we have just described, excited a strong sensation among the blacks who scrubbed the stoops and pavements. He was closely attended to the place where he hailed the periagua, by four or five loungers, who studied his manner and movements with the admiration that men of their class seldom fail to bestow on those who bear about them the evidence of having passed lives of adventure, and perhaps of hardship and daring. Beckoning to one of these idlers to follow him, the hero of the India-shawl stepped

into an empty boat, and casting lose its fast, he skulled the light yawl towards the craft which was awaiting his arrival. There was, in truth, something in the reckless air, the decision, and the manly attitudes of so fine a specimen of a seaman, that might have attracted notice from those who were more practised in the world than the little crowd of admirers he left behind him. With an easy play of wrist and elbow, he caused the yawl to glide ahead, like some indolent marine animal swimming through its element; and as he stood, firm as a planted statue, with a foot on each gunwale, there was much of that confidence created by his steadiness, that one acquires by viewing the repeated and successful efforts of a skilful rope-dancer. When the yawl reached the side of the periagua, he dropped a small Spanish coin into the open palm of the negro, and sprang on the side of the latter, with an exertion of muscle that sent the little boat he quitted half way back towards the shore, leaving the frightened black to steady

himself in his rocking tenement in the best manner he could.

The tread and posture of the stranger, when he gained the half-deck of the periagua, was finely nautical, and confident to audacity. He seemed to analyse the half-maritime character of the crew and passengers at a glance, and to feel that sort of superiority over his companions, which men of his profession were then a little too wont to entertain towards those whose ambition could be bounded by terra firma. His eye turned upward, at the simple rig and modest sails of the periagua, while his upper lip curled with the knowing expression of a critic. Then kicking the fore sheet clear of its cleet, and suffering the sail to fill, he stepped from one butter-tub to another, making a stepping-stone of the lap of a countryman by the way, and alighted in the stern-sheets in the midst of the party of Alderman Van Beverout, with the agility and fearlessness of a feathered Mercury. With a coolness that did infinite credit to his

powers for commanding, his next act was to dispossess the amazed schipper of the helm, taking the tiller into his own hands, with as much composure as if he were the every-day occupant of the post. When he saw that the boat was beginning to move through the water, he found leisure to bestow some observation on his fellow-voyagers. The first that met his bold and reckless eye was François, the domestic of Alida.

“ If it come to blow in squalls, Commodore,” observed the intruder, with a gravity that half deceived the attentive Frenchman, while he pointed to the bag in which the latter wore his hair, “ you’ll be troubled to carry your broad pennant. But so experienced an officer has not put to sea without having a storm cue in readiness for foul weather.”

The valet did not, or affected not to understand the allusion, maintaining an air of dignified but silent superiority.

“ The gentleman is in a foreign service, and

does not understand an English mariner ! The worst that can come after all, of too much top-hamper, is to cut away, and let it drift with the scud. May I make bold to ask, Judge, if the courts have done any thing of late concerning the freebooters among the islands ?”

“ I have not the honour to bear her Majesty’s commission,” coldly returned Van Staats of Kinderhook, to whom this question had been hardily put.

“ The best navigator is sometimes puzzled by a hazy observation, and many an old seaman has taken a fog-bank for solid ground. Since you are not in the courts, Sir, I wish you joy ; for it is running among shoals to be cruising there, whether as judge or suitor. One is never fairly snug and land-locked, while in company of a lawyer, and yet the devil himself cannot always give the sharks a good offing. A pretty sheet of water, friends, and one as snug as rotten cables and foul winds can render desirable, is this bay of York !”

“ You are a mariner of the long voyage,” returned the Patroon, unwilling that Alida should not believe him equal to bandying wits with the stranger.

“ Long or short ; Calcutta, or Cape Cod ; dead reckoning, eye-sight, or star-gazing, all’s one to your real dolphin. The shape of the coast, between Fundy and Horn, is as familiar to my eye as an admirer to this pretty young lady ; and as to the other shore, I have run it down oftener than the commodore here has ever set his pennant, blow high or blow low. A cruise like this is a Sunday in my navigation, though I dare say you took leave of the wife, blessed the children, overhauled the will, and sent to ask a good word from the priests, before you came aboard ?”

“ Had these ceremonies been observed, the danger would not have been increased,” said the young Patroon, anxious to steal a glance at la Belle Barbérie, though his timidity caused him, in truth, to look the other way. “ One

is never nearer danger for being prepared to meet it."

" True ; we must all die when the reckoning is out. Hang or drown—gibbet or bullet clears the world of a great deal of rubbish, or the decks would get to be so littered that the vessel could not be worked. The last cruise is the longest of all, and honest papers, with a clean bill of health, may help a man into port, when he is past keeping the open sea. How now, Schipper ! what lies are floating about the docks this morning ? when did the last Albany man get his tub down the river, or whose gelding has been ridden to death in chase of a witch ?"

" The devil's babes !" muttered the Alderman, " there is no want of roisterers to torment such innocents !"

" Have the buccaneers taken to praying, or does their trade thrive in this heel of the war ?" continued the mariner of the India-shawl, disregarding the complaint of the burgher. " The times are getting heavy for men of metal, as

may be seen by the manner in which yon cruiser wears out her ground-tackle, instead of trying the open sea. May I spring every spar I carry, but I would have the boat out and give her an airing, before to-morrow, if the Queen would condescend to put your humble servant in charge of the craft ! The man lies there, at his anchors, as if he had a good freight of real Hollands in his hold, and was waiting for a few bales of beaver-skins to barter for his strong waters."

As the stranger coolly expressed this opinion of her Majesty's ship *Coquette*, he rolled his glance over the persons of his companions, suffering it to rest a moment, with a secret significance, on the steady eye of the burgher.

"Well," he continued, "the sloop answers for a floating vane, to tell which way the tide is running, if she does nothing better; and that must be a great assistance, Schipper, in the navigation of one who keeps as bright a look-out on the manner in which the world whirls round as a gentleman of your sagacity !"

“ If the news in the creek be true,” rejoined the unoffended owner of the *periagua*, “ there will be other business for Captain Ludlow and the *Coquette*, before many days !”

“ Ah ! having eaten all his meat and bread, the man will be obliged to victual his ship anew ! ’Twere a pity so active a gentleman should keep a fast, in a brisk tide’s way. And when his coppers are once more filled, and the dinner is fairly eaten, what dost think will be his next duty ?”

“ There is a report, among the boatmen of the South Bay, that something was seen yesternight off the outer side of Long Island !”

“ I’ll answer for the truth of that rumour, for having come up with the evening flood, I saw it myself.”

“ Der duyvel’s luck ! and what dost take it to be ?”

“ The Atlantic Ocean ; if you doubt my word, I appeal to this well ballasted old gentle-

man, who, being a schoolmaster, is able to give you latitude and longitude for its truth."

"I am Alderman Van Beverout," muttered the object of this new attack, between his teeth, though apparently but half disposed to notice one who set so little bounds to his discourse.

"I beg a thousand pardons!" returned the strange seaman, with a grave inclination of his body. "The solidity of your worship's countenance deceived me. It may be indeed unreasonable to expect any alderman to know the position of the Atlantic Ocean! And yet, gentlemen, on the honour of a man who has seen much salt water in his time, I do assure you the sea I speak of is actually there. If there be any thing on it, or in it, that should not in reason be so, this worthy commander of the periagua will let us know the rest."

"A wood boat from the inlets says, the Skimmer of the Seas was lately seen standing along the coast," returned the ferryman, in the

tone of one who is certain of delivering matter of general interest.

“Your true sea-dog, who runs in and out of inlets, is a man for marvels!” coolly observed the stranger. “They know the colour of the sea at night, and are for ever steering in the wind’s eye in search of adventures. I wonder more of them are not kept at making almanacks! There was a mistake concerning a thunder-storm in the last I bought, and all for the want of proper science. And pray, friend, who is this Skimmer of the Seas that is said to be running after his needle, like a tailor who has found a hole in his neighbour’s coat?”

“The witches may tell! I only know that such a rover there is, and that he is here to-day and there to-morrow. Some say, it is only a craft of mist that skims the top of the seas, like a sailing water-fowl, and others think it is the sprite of a vessel that was rifled and burnt by Kidd, in the Indian Ocean, looking for its

gold and the killed. I saw him once myself, but the distance was so great, and his manœuvres so unnatural, that I could hardly give a good account of his hull or rig."

"This is matter that don't get into the log every watch! Where away, or in what seas, didst meet the thing?"

"'Twas off the Branch. We were fishing in thick weather, and when the mist lifted a little, there was a craft seen standing in-shore, running like a race-horse; but while we got our anchor, she had made a league of offing on the other tack!"

"A certain proof of—either her or your activity. But what might have been the form and shape of your fly-away?"

"Nothing determined. To one she seemed a full rigged and booming ship; another took her for a Bermudian scudder; while to me she had the look of twenty periaguas built into a single craft. It is well known, however, that a West Indiaman went to sea that night, and

though it is now three years, no tidings of her, or her crew, have ever come to any in York. I have never gone upon the banks to fish since that day in thick weather."

"You have done well," observed the stranger. "I have seen many wonderful sights myself on the rolling ocean, and he, whose business it is to lay between wind and water, like you, my friend, should never trust himself within reach of one of those devil's flyers. I could tell you a tale of an affair in the calm latitudes, under the burning sun, that would be a lesson to all of over-bold curiosity! Commission and character are not affairs for your in-shore coaster."

"We have time to hear it," observed the Patroon, whose attention had been excited by the discourse, and who read in the dark eye of Alida that she felt an interest in the expected narrative.

But the countenance of the stranger suddenly grew serious. He shook his head, like one who

had sufficient reasons for his silence, and relinquishing the tiller, he quite coolly obliged a gaping countryman, in the centre of the boat, to yield his place, where he laid his own athletic form, at full length, folded his arms on his breast, and shut his eyes. In less than five minutes, all within hearing had audible evidence that this extraordinary son of the ocean was in a sound sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

“Be patient, for the prize I’ll bring thee to,
Shall hoodwink this mischance.”

Tempest.

THE air, audacity, and language of the unknown mariner had produced a marked sensation among the passengers of the periagua. It was plain, by the playfulness that lurked about the coal-black eye of la Belle Barbérie, that she had been amused by his sarcasms, though the boldness of his manner had caused her to maintain the reserve which she believed necessary to her sex and condition. The Patroon studied

the countenance of his mistress, and though half offended by the freedom of the intruder, he had believed it wisest to tolerate the liberties, as the natural excesses of a spirit that had been lately released from the monotony of a sea life. The repose which usually reigned in the countenance of the Alderman had been a little troubled; but he succeeded in concealing his discontent from any impertinent observation. When the chief actor in the foregoing scene, therefore, saw fit to withdraw, the usual tranquillity was restored, and his presence appeared to be forgotten.

An ebbing tide and a freshening breeze quickly carried the periagua past the smaller islands of the bay, and brought the cruiser, called the *Coquette*, more distinctly into view. This vessel, a ship of twenty guns, lay abreast of the hamlet, on the shores of Staten Island, which was the destination of the ferry boat. Here was the usual anchorage of outward bound ships, which awaited a change of wind, and it was here that vessels then, as in our times, were

subject to those examinations and delays which are imposed for the safety of the inhabitants of the city. The *Coquette* was alone, however ; for the arrival of a trader from a distant port, was an event of unfrequent occurrence at the commencement of the eighteenth century.

The course of the *periagua* brought her within fifty feet of the sloop of war. As the former approached, a movement of curiosity and interest occurred among those she contained.

“ Take more room for your *Milk-Maid*,” grumbled the Alderman, observing that the schipper was willing to gratify his passengers, by running as near as possible to the dark sides of the cruiser. “ *Seas and Oceans!* is not *York Bay* wide enough, that you must brush the dust out of the muzzles of the guns of yon lazy ship ! If the Queen knew how her money was eaten and drunk by the idle knaves aboard her, she would send them all to hunt for freebooters among the islands. Look at the land, *Alida*, child, and you’ll think no more of the fright the

gaping dunce is giving thee; he only wishes to show his skill in steering."

But the niece manifested none of the terror that the uncle was willing to ascribe to her fears. Instead of turning pale, the colour deepened on her cheeks, as the periagua came dancing along, under the lee of the cruiser; and if her respiration became quicker than usual, it was scarcely produced by the agitation of alarm. The near sight of the tall masts, and of the maze of cordage that hung nearly above their heads, however, prevented the change from being noted. A hundred curious eyes were already peeping at them through the ports, or over the bulwarks of the ship, when suddenly an officer, who wore the undress of a naval captain of that day, sprang into the main rigging of the cruiser, and saluted the party in the periagua, by waving his hat hurriedly, like one who was agreeably taken by surprise.

"A fair sky and gentle breezes to each and all!" he cried, with the hearty manner of a sea-

man. "I kiss my hand to the fair Alida; and the Alderman will take a sailor's good wishes; Mr. Van Staats, I salute you."

"Ay," muttered the burgher, "your idlers have nothing better to do, than to make words answer for deeds. A lazy war and a distant enemy make you seamen the lords of the land, Captain Ludlow."

Alida blushed still deeper, hesitated, and then, by a movement that was half involuntary, she waved her handkerchief. The young Patroon arose, and answered the salutation by a courteous bow. By this time the ferry-boat was nearly past the ship, and the scowl was quitting the face of the Alderman, when the mariner of the India shawl sprang to his feet, and, in a moment, he stood again in the centre of their party.

"A pretty seat-boat, and a neat show aloft!" he said, as his understanding eye scanned the rigging of the royal cruiser, taking the tiller at the same time, with all his former indifference from the hands of the schipper. "Her

Majesty should have good service from such a racer, and no doubt the youth in her rigging is a man to get the most out of his craft. We'll take another observation: Draw away your head sheet, boy."

The stranger had put the helm a-lee, while speaking, and by the time the order he had given was uttered, the quick-working boat was about, and nearly filled on the other tack. In another minute, she was again brushing along the side of the sloop of war. A common complaint against this hardy interference with the regular duty of the boat, was about to break out of the lips of the Alderman and the schipper, when he of the India shawl lifted his cap, and addressed the officer in the rigging, with all the self-possession he had manifested in the intercourse with those nearer his person.

"Has her Majesty need of a man in her service, who has seen, in his time, more blue water than hard ground? or is there no empty berth

in so gallant a cruiser for one who must do a seaman's duty, or starve?"

The descendant of the king-hating Ludlows, as the Lord Cornbury had styled the race of the commander of the *Coquette*, was quite as much surprised by the appearance of him who put this question, as he was by the coolness with which a mariner of ordinary condition presumed to address an officer who bore so high a commission as his own. He had, however, sufficient time to recollect in whose presence he stood, ere he replied, for the stranger had again placed the helm a-lee, and caused the foresail to be thrown aback; a change that made the *periagua* stationary.

"The Queen will always receive a bold mariner in her pay, if he come prepared to serve with skill and fidelity," he said; "as a proof of which, let a rope be thrown the *periagua*; we shall treat more at our ease under her Majesty's pennant. I shall be proud to entertain Alderman Van Beverout, in the mean time,

and a cutter will always be at his command when he shall have occasion to quit us."

"Your land-loving aldermen find their way from a Queen's cruiser to the shore, more easily than a seaman of twenty years' experience," returned the other, without giving the burgher time to express his thanks for the polite offer of the other. "You have gone through the Gibraltar passage, without doubt, noble captain, being a gentleman that has got so fine a boat under his orders?"

"Duty has taken me into the Italian seas, more than once," answered Ludlow, half disposed to resent this familiarity, though too anxious to keep the periagua near, to quarrel with him who so evidently had produced the unexpected pleasure.

"Then you know that, though a lady might fan a ship through the straits eastward, it needs a Levant breeze to bring her out again. Her Majesty's pennants are long, and when they get foul around the limbs of a thoroughly bred

sea-dog, it passes all his art to clear the jam. It is most worthy of remark, that the better the seaman the less his power to cast loose the knot !”

“ If the pennant be so long, it may reach farther than you wish !—But a bold volunteer has no occasion to dread a press.”

“ I fear the berth I wish is filled,” returned the other, curling his lip. “ Let draw the fore-sheet, lad ; we will take our departure, leaving the fly of the pennant well under our lee. Adieu, brave Captain ; when you have need of a thorough rover, and dream of stern chases and wet sails, think of him who visited your ship at her lazy moorings.”

Ludlow bit his lip, and though his fine face reddened to the temples, he met the arch glance of Alida, and laughed. But he who had so hardily braved the resentment of a man, powerful as the commander of a royal cruiser in a British colony, appeared to understand the hazard of his situation. The periagua whirled round on her heel, and at the next minute it was

bending to the breeze, and dashing through the little waves towards the shore. Three boats left the cruiser at the same moment. One, which evidently contained her captain, advanced with the usual dignified movement of a barge landing an officer of rank, but the others were urged ahead, with all the earnestness of a hot chase.

“ Unless disposed to serve the Queen, you have not done well, my friend, to brave one of her commanders at the muzzles of his guns,” observed the Patroon, soon as the state of the case became too evident to doubt of the intentions of the man-of-war’s men.

“ That Captain Ludlow would gladly take some of us out of this boat, by fair means or by foul, is a fact clear as a bright star in a cloudless night, and well knowing a seaman’s duty to his superiors, I shall leave him to his choice.”

“ In which case you will shortly eat her Majesty’s bread,” pithily returned the Alderman.

“ The food is unpalatable and I reject it—

and yet here is a boat whose crew seem determined to make one swallow worse fare."

The unknown mariner ceased speaking, for the situation of the *periagua* was truly getting to be a little critical. At least so it seemed to the less instructed landsmen who were witnesses of this unexpected rencontre. As the ferry-boat had drawn in with the island, the wind hauled more through the pass which communicates with the outer bay, and it became necessary to heave about twice, in order to fetch to windward of the usual landing place. The first of these manœuvres had been executed, and as it necessarily changed their course, the passengers saw that the cutter to which the stranger alluded was enabled to get within-shore of them; or nearer to the wharf, where they ought to land, than they were themselves. Instead of suffering himself to be led off by a pursuit that he knew might easily be rendered useless, the officer who commanded this boat cheered his men, and pulled swiftly to the point of debarkation. On

the other hand, a second cutter, which had already reached the line of the periagua's course, lay on its oars, and awaited its approach. The unknown mariner manifested no intention to avoid the interview. He still held the tiller, and as effectually commanded the little vessel, as if his authority were of a more regular character. The audacity and decision of his air and conduct, aided by the consummate manner in which he worked the boat, might alone have achieved this momentary usurpation, had not the general feeling against impressment been so much in his favour.

“The devil's fangs!” grumbled the schipper. “If you should keep the Milk-Maid away, we shall lose a little in distance, though I think the man-of-war's men will be puzzled to catch her with a flowing sheet!”

“The Queen has sent a message by the gentleman,” the mariner rejoined; “it would be unmannerly to refuse to hear it.”

“Heave-to, the periagua!” shouted the

young officer in the cutter. "In her Majesty's name I command you, obey."

"God bless the royal lady!" returned he of the foul anchors and gay shawl, while the swift ferry-boat continued to dash a-head. "We owe her duty, and are glad to see so proper a gentleman employed in her behalf."

By this time the boats were fifty feet asunder. No sooner was there room, than the periagua once more flew round, and commenced anew its course, dashing in again towards the shore. It was necessary, however, to venture within an oar's length of the cutter, or to keep away, a loss of ground to which he who controlled her movements shewed no disposition to submit. The officer arose, and as the periagua drew near, it was evident his hand held a pistol, though he seemed reluctant to exhibit the weapon. The mariner stepped aside, in a manner to offer a full view of all in his groupe, as he sarcastically observed—

“Choose your object, Sir; in such a party a man of sentiment may have a preference.”

The young man coloured, as much with shame at the degrading duty he had been commissioned to perform, as with vexation at his failure. Recovering his self composure, however, he lifted his hat to la Belle Barbérie, and the periagua dashed on in triumph. Still the leading cutter was near the shore, where it soon arrived, the crew lying on their oars at the end of the wharf, in evident expectation of the arrival of the ferry-boat. At this sight the schipper shook his head, and looked up in the bold face of his passenger, in a manner to betray how much his mind misgave the result. But the tall mariner maintained his coolness, and began to make merry allusions to the service which he had braved with so much temerity, and from which no one believed he was yet likely to escape. By the former manœuvres the periagua had gained a position well to windward of the wharf, and she was

now steered close upon the wind, directly for the shore. Against the consequences of a perseverance in this course, however, the schipper saw fit to remonstrate.

“ Shipwrecks and rocky bottoms !” exclaimed the alarmed waterman. “ A Holland galliot would go to pieces, if you should run her in among those stepping stones with this breeze ! No honest boatman loves to see a man stowed in a cruiser’s hold, like a thief caged in his prison ; but when it comes to breaking the nose of the Milk-Maid, it is asking too much of her owner, to stand by and look on.”

“ There shall not be a dimple of her lovely countenance deranged,” answered his cool passenger. “ Now, lower away your sails, and we’ll run along the shore, down to yon wharf. ’Twould be an ungallant act to treat the dairy girl with so little ceremony, gentlemen, after the lively foot and quick evolutions she has shown in our behalf. The best dancer in the island could not have better played her part,

though jigging under the music of a three stringed fiddle !”

By this time the sails were lowered, and the periagua was gliding down towards the place of landing, running always at the distance of some fifty feet from the shore.

“ Every craft has its allotted time, like a mortal,” continued the inexplicable mariner of the India-shawl. “ If she is to die a sudden death, there is your beam-end and stern-way, which takes her into the grave without funeral service, or parish prayers; your dropsy is being water-logged; gout and rheumatism kill like a broken back and loose joints; indigestion is a shifting cargo, with guns adrift; the gallows is a bottomry bond, with lawyers’ fees; while fire, drowning, death by religious melancholy, and suicide, are a careless gunner, sunken rocks, false lights, and a lubberly captain.”

Ere any were apprised of his intention, this singular being then sprang from the boat

on the cap of a little rock, over which the waves were washing, whence he bounded from stone to stone, by vigorous efforts, till he fairly leaped to land. In another minute he was lost to view, among the dwellings of the hamlet.

The arrival of the periagua, which immediately after reached the wharf, the disappointment of the cutter's crew, and the return of both the boats to their ship, succeeded as matters of course.

CHAPTER V.

“ *Oliv.*—Did he write this ?

Clo.—Ay, Madam.”

What you will.

IF we say that Alida de Barbérie did not cast a glance behind her, as the party quitted the wharf, in order to see whether the boat that contained the commander of the cruiser followed the example of the others, we shall probably pourtray the maiden as one that was less subject to the influence of coquetry than the truth would justify. To the great discontent of the Alderman, whatever might have been the feelings of his niece on the occasion,

the barge continued to approach the shore, in a manner which showed that the young seaman betrayed no visible interest in the result of the chase.

The heights of Staten Island, a century ago, were covered much as they are at present with a growth of dwarf trees. Foot paths led among this meagre vegetation, in divers directions, and as the hamlet at the Quarantine Ground was the point whence they all diverged, it required a practised guide to thread their mazes, without a loss of both time and distance. It would seem, however, that the worthy burgher was fully equal to the office, for, moving with more than his usual agility, he soon led his companions into the wood, and by frequently altering his course, so completely confounded their sense of the relative bearings of places, that it is not probable one of them all could very readily have extricated himself from the labyrinth.

“ Clouds, and shady bowers ! ” exclaimed

Myndert, when he had achieved to his own satisfaction this evasion of the pursuit he wished to avoid; “ little oaks and green pines are pleasant on a June morning. You shall have mountain-air and a sea-breeze, Patroon, to quicken the appetite at the Lust in Rust. If Alida will speak, the girl can say that a mouthful of the elixir is better for a rosy cheek, than all the concoctions and washes that were ever invented to give a man a heart-ache.”

“ If the place be as much changed as the road that leads to it,” returned la Belle Barbérie, glancing her dark eye in vain in the direction of the bay they had quitted, “ I should scarcely venture an opinion on a subject of which I am obliged to confess utter ignorance.”

“ Ah, woman is nought but vanities! To see and to be seen is the delight of the sex. Though we are a thousand times more comfortable in this wood than we should be in walking along the water-side, why, the sea-gulls and snipes lose the benefit of our company! The

salt water, and all who live on it, are to be avoided by a wise man, Mr. Van Staats, except as they both serve to cheapen freight and to render trade brisk. You'll thank me for this care, niece of mine, when you reach the bluff, cool as a package of furs free from moth, and fresh and beautiful as a Holland tulip with the dew on it."

"To resemble the latter, one might consent to walk blindfold, dearest uncle, and so we dismiss the subject. François, fais-moi le plaisir de porter ce petit livre ; malgré la fraîcheur de là forêt, j'ai besoin de m'évanter."

The valet took the book, with an empressement that defeated the more tardy politeness of the Patroon, and when he saw, by the vexed eye and flushed cheek of his young mistress, that she was incommoded, rather by an internal, than by the external heat, he whispered considerably—

"Que ma chère, Mademoiselle Alide, ne se fâche pas ! Elle ne manquerait jamais d'ad-

mirateurs, dans un désert. Ah ! si Mam'selle allait voir la patrie de ses ancêtres !—”

“ Merci bien, mon cher ; gardez les feuilles fortement fermées. Il y a des papiers dedans.”

“ Monsieur François,” said the Alderman, separating his niece, with little ceremony, from her nearly parental attendant, by the interposition of his own bulky person, and motioning for the others to proceed, “ a word with thee in confidence. I have noted, in the course of a busy, and I hope a profitable life, that a faithful servant is an honest counsellor. Next to Holland and England, both of which are great commercial nations, and the Indies, which are necessary to these colonies, together with a natural preference for the land in which I was born, I have always been of opinion that France is a very good sort of a country. I think, Mr. Francis, that dislike to the seas has kept you from returning thither, since the decease of my late brother-in-law ?”

“ Wid like for Mam'selle Alide, Monsieur, avec votre permission.”

“Your affection for my niece, honest François, is not to be doubted. It is as certain as the payment of a good draught by Crommeline, Van Stopper, and Van Gelt, of Amsterdam. Ah! old valet! she is fresh and blooming as a rose, and a girl of excellent qualities! ’Tis a pity that she is a little opinionated; a defect that she doubtless inherits from her Norman ancestors, since all of my family have ever been remarkable for listening to reason. The Normans were an obstinate race, as witness the siege of Rochelle, by which oversight real estate in that city must have lost much in value.”

“Mille excuses, Monsieur Bevre’——; more beautiful as de rose, and no opiniâtre du tout. Mon dieu! pour sa qualité, c’est une famille très-ancienne.”

“That was a weak point with my brother Barbérie, and after all, it did not add a cipher to the sum total of the assets. The best blood, Mr. François, is that which has been best fed.

The line of Hugh Capet himself would fail without the butcher, and the butcher would certainly fail without customers that can pay. François, thou art a man who understands the value of a sure footing in the world ; would it not be a thousand pities that such a girl as Alida should throw herself away on one, whose best foundation is no better than a rolling ship ?”

“ Certainement, Monsieur, Mam’selle be too good to roll in de ship.”

“ Obliged to follow a husband, up and down ; among freebooters and dishonest traders ; in fair weather and foul ; hot and cold ; wet and dry ; bilge water and salt water ; cramps and nausea ; salt junk and no junk ; gales and calms, and all for a hasty judgment formed in sanguine youth !”

The face of the valet had responded to the Alderman’s enumeration of the evils that would attend so ill-judged a step in his niece, as faithfully as if each muscle had been a mirror, to

reflect the contortions of one suffering under the malady of the sea.

“ Parbleu, c'est horrible, cette mer !” he ejaculated, when the other had done. “ It is grand malheur, dere should be watair but for drink, and for la propreté, avec fossé to keep de carp round le château. Mais, Mam'selle, be no haste jugement, and she shall have mari on la terre solide.”

“ 'Twould be better that the estate of my brother-in-law should be kept in sight, judicious François, than to be sent adrift on the high seas.”

“ Dere vas marin dans la famille de Barbérie, nevair.”

“ Bonds and balances ! if the savings of one I could name, frugal François, were added in current coin, the sum total would sink a common ship. You know it is my intention to remember Alida, in settling accounts with the world.”

“ If Monsieur de Barbérie was 'live, Mon-

sieur Alderman, he should say des choses convenables ; mais, malheureusement, mon cher maître est mort, and, Sair, I shall be bold to remercier pour lui, et pour toute sa famille.”

“ Women are perverse, and sometimes they have pleasure in doing the very thing they are desired not to do.”

“ Ma foi, oui !”

“ Prudent men should manage them with soft words and rich gifts ; with these they become orderly, as a pair of well broke geldings.”

“ Monsieur know,” said the old valet, rubbing his hands, and laughing with the subdued voice of a well-bred domestic, though he could not conceal a jocular wink ; “ pourtant il est garçon ! Le cadeau be good for de demoiselles, and bettair as for de dames.”

“ Wedlock and blinkers ! it is we gassons, as you call us, who ought to know. Your hen-pecked husband has no time to generalize among the sex, in order to understand the real

quality of the article. Now, here is Van Staats of Kinderhook, faithful François; what think you of such a youth for a husband for Alida?"

"Pourtant, Mam'selle like de vivacité; Monsieur le Patroon be nevair trop vif."

"The more likely to be sure.—Hist, I hear a footstep. We are followed—chased, perhaps, I should say, to speak in the language of these sea gentry. Now is the time to show this Captain Ludlow how a Frenchman can wind him round his finger on terra firma. Loiter in the rear, and draw our navigator on a wrong course. When he has run into a fog, come yourself, with all speed to the oak on the bluff. There we shall await you."

Flattered by this confidence, and really persuaded that he was furthering the happiness of her he served, the old valet nodded in reply to the Alderman's wink and chuckle, and immediately relaxed his speed. The former pushed ahead, and in a minute, he and those who fol-

lowed had turned short to the left and were out of sight.

Though faithfully, and even affectionately attached to Alida, her servant had many of the qualifications of an European domestic. Trained in all the ruses of his profession, he was of that school which believes civilization is to be measured by artifice, and success lost some of its value, when it had been effected by the vulgar machinery of truth and common sense. No wonder, then, the retainer entered into the views of the Alderman with more than a usual relish for the duty. He heard the cracking of the dried twigs beneath the footstep of him who followed, and in order that there might be no chance of missing the desired interview, the valet began to hum a French air in so loud a key, as to be certain the sounds would reach any ear that was nigh. The twigs snapped more rapidly, the footsteps seemed nearer, and then the hero of the India shawl sprang to the side of the expecting François.

The disappointment seemed mutual, and on the part of the domestic it entirely disconcerted all his pre-arranged schemes for misleading the commander of the *Coquette*. Not so with the bold mariner. So far from his self-possession being disturbed, it would have been no easy matter to restrain his audacity, even in situations far more trying than any in which he has yet been presented to the reader.

“What cheer, in thy woodland cruise, Monsieur Broad-Pennant?” he said, with infinite coolness, the instant his steady glance had ascertained they were alone. “This is safer navigation for an officer of thy draught of water, than running about the bays in a *periagua*. What may be the longitude, and where-a-way did you part company from the consorts?”

“Sair, I valk in de vood for de plaisir, and I go on de bay for de—parbleu, non! ’tis to follow ma jeune maîtresse I go on de bay; and, Sair, I wish dey who do love de bay and

de sea, would not come into de vood, du tout."

"Well spoken, and with ample spirit;—what, a student too! one, in a wood, should glean something from his labours. Is it the art of furling a main cue, that is taught in this pretty volume?"

As the mariner put this question, he very deliberately took the book from François, who, instead of resenting the liberty, rather offered the volume in exultation.

"No, Sair, it is not how to furl la queue, but how to touch de soul; not de art to haul over de calm, but—oui, c'est plein de connoissance et d'esprit! Ah! ha! you know de Cid! le grand homme! l'homme de génie! If you read, Monsieur Marin, you shall see la vraie poésie! Not de big book and no single rhyme—Sair, I do not vish to say vat is pénible, mais it is not one book widout rhyme; it was not écrit on de sea. Le diable! que le vrai génie et les nobles sentiments se trouvent dans ce livre, là!"

“ Ay, I see it is a log-book for every man to note his mind in. I return you Master Cid, with his fine sentiments in the bargain. Great as was his genius, it would seem he was not the man to write all that I find between the leaves.”

“ He not write him all ! Yes, Sair, he shall write him six time more dan all, if la France a besoin. Que l’envie de ces Anglais se découvre quand on parle des beaux génies de la France !”

“ I will only say, if the gentleman wrote the whole that is in the book, and it is as fine as you would make a plain sea-faring man believe, he did wrong not to print it.”

“ Print !” echoed François, opening his eyes and the volume by a common impulse. “ Imprimé ! ha ! here is papier of Mam’selle Alide, assurément.”

“ Take better heed of it then,” interrupted the seaman of the shawl. “ As for your Cid, to me it is an useless volume, since it teaches

neither the latitude of a shoal, nor the shape of a coast."

"Sair, it teach de morale; de rock of de passion, et les grands mouvements de l'âme! Oui, Sair; it teach all un Monsieur vish to know. Tout le monde read him in la France; en province, comme en ville. If Sa Majesté le Grand Louis be not so mal avisé as to chasser Messieurs les Huguenots from his royaume, I shall go to Paris, to hear le Cid, moi-même!"

"A good journey to you, Monsieur Cue. We may meet on the road, until which time I take my departure. The day may come, when we shall converse with a rolling sea beneath us. Till then, brave cheer!"

"Adieu, Monsieur," returned François, bowing with a politeness that had become too familiar to be forgotten. "If we do not meet but in de sea, we shall not meet nevaire. Ah, ha, ha! Monsieur le Marin n'aime pas à entendre parler de la gloire de la France! Je

voudrais bien savoir lire ce f—e Shak-a-spear, pour voir combien l'immortel Corneille lui est supérieur. Ma foi, oui; Monsieur Pierre Corneille est vraiment un homme illustre!"

The faithful, self-complacent, and aged valet, then pursued his way towards the large oak on the bluff; for as he ceased speaking, the mariner of the gay sash, had turned deeper into the woods and left him alone. Proud of the manner in which he had met the audacity of the stranger, prouder still of the reputation of the author, whose fame had been known in France long before his own departure from Europe, and not a little consoled with the reflection that he had contributed his mite to support the honour of his distant and well-beloved country, the honest François pressed the volume affectionately beneath his arm, and hastened on after his mistress.

Though the position of Staten Island and its surrounding bays is so familiar to the Manhat-tanese, an explanation of the localities may be

agreeable to readers who dwell at a distance from the scene of the tale.

It has already been said that the principal communication between the bays of Rariton and York, is called the Narrows. At the mouth of this passage, the land on Staten Island rises in a high bluff, which overhangs the water, not unlike the tale-fraught cape of Misenum. From this elevated point, the eye not only commands a view of both estuaries and the city, but it looks far beyond the point of Sandy Hook, into the open sea. It is here that, in our own days, ships are first noted in the offing, and whence the news of the approach of his vessel is communicated to the expecting merchant by means of the telegraph. In the early part of the last century, arrivals were too rare to support such an establishment. The bluff was therefore little resorted to, except by some occasional admirer of scenery, or by those countrymen whom business, at long intervals, drew to the spot.

It had been early cleared of its wood, and the oak already mentioned was the only tree standing in a space of some ten or a dozen acres.

It has been seen that Alderman Van Beverout had appointed this solitary oak as the place of rendezvous with François. Thither then he took his way on parting from the valet, and to this spot we must now transfer the scene. A rude seat had been placed around the root of the tree, and here the whole party, with the exception of the absent domestic, were soon seated. In a minute, however, they were joined by the exulting François, who immediately related the particulars of his recent interview with the stranger.

“A clear conscience, with cordial friends, and a fair balance sheet, may keep a man warm in January, even in this climate,” said the Alderman, willing to turn the discourse; “but what with rebellious blacks, hot streets, and spoiling furs, it passeth mortal powers to keep

cool in yonder overgrown and crowded town. Thou seest, Patroon, the spot of white on the opposite side of the bay? Breezes and fanning! that is the Lust in Rust, where cordial enters the mouth at every breath, and where a man has room to cast up the sum-total of his thoughts any hour in the twenty-four."

"We seem quite as effectually alone on this hill, with the advantage of having a city in the view," remarked Alida, with an emphasis that shewed she meant even more than she expressed.

"We are by ourselves, niece of mine," returned the Alderman, rubbing his hands as if he secretly felicitated himself that the fact were so. "That truth cannot be denied, and good company we are, though the opinion comes from one who is not a cipher in the party. Modesty is a poor man's wealth, but as we grow substantial in the world, Patroon, one can afford to begin to speak truth of himself as well as of his neighbour."

“ In which case little but good will be uttered from the mouth of Alderman Van Beverout,” said Ludlow, appearing so suddenly from behind the root of the tree, as effectually to shut the mouth of the burgher. “ My desire to offer the services of the ship to your party, has led to this abrupt intrusion, and I hope will obtain its pardon.”

“ The power to forgive is a prerogative of the Governor, who represents the Queen,” drily returned the Alderman. “ If her Majesty has so little employment for her cruisers, that their captains can dispose of them in behalf of old men and young maidens, why, happy is the age, and commerce should flourish !”

“ If the two duties are compatible, the greater the reason why a commander should felicitate himself that he may be of service to so many. You are bound to the Jersey Highlands, Mr. Van Beverout ?”

“ I am bound to a comfortable and very pri-

vate abode, called the *Lust in Rust*, Captain Cornelius Van Cuyler Ludlow."

The young man bit his lip, and his healthful but brown cheek flushed a deeper red than common, though he preserved his composure.

"And I am bound to sea," he soon said. "The wind is getting fresh, and your boat, which I see at this moment standing in for the islands, will find it difficult to make way against its force. The *Coquette's* anchor will be a-weight in twenty minutes, and I shall find two hours of an ebbing tide and a top-gallant breeze but too short a time for the pleasure of entertaining such guests. I am certain that the fears of *la belle* will favour my wishes, whichever side of the question her inclinations may happen to be."

"And they are with her uncle," quickly returned Alida. "I am so little of a sailor that prudence, if not pusillanimity, teaches me to depend on the experience of older heads."

"Older I may not pretend to be," said Lud-

low, colouring; "but Mr. Van Beverout will see no pretension in believing myself as good a judge of wind and tide as even he himself can be."

"You are said to command her Majesty's sloop with skill, Captain Ludlow, and it is creditable to the colony that it has produced so good an officer; though I believe your grandfather came into the province so lately as on the restoration of King Charles the Second?"

"We cannot claim descent from the United Provinces, Alderman Van Beverout, on the parental side, but whatever may have been the political opinions of my grandfather, those of his descendant have never been questioned. Let me entreat the fair Alida to take counsel of the apprehension I am sure she feels, and to persuade her uncle that the Coquette is safer than his periagua."

"It is said to be easier to enter than to quit your ship," returned the laughing Alida. "By certain symptoms that attended our passage to

the island, your Coquette, like others, is fond of conquest. One is not safe beneath so malign an influence."

"This is a reputation given by our enemies. I had hoped for a different answer from la Belle Barbérie."

The close of the sentence was uttered with an emphasis that caused the blood to quicken its movement in the veins of the maiden. It was fortunate that neither of their companions was very observant, or else suspicions might have been excited, that a better intelligence existed between the young sailor and the heiress, than would have comported with their wishes and intentions.

"I had hoped for a different answer from la Belle Barbérie," repeated Ludlow, in a lower voice, but with even a still more emphatic tone than before.

There was evidently a struggle in the mind of Alida.—She overcame it before her confusion could be noted, and turning to the valet,

she said, with the composure and grace that became a gentlewoman—

“ Rends-moi le livre, François.”

“ Le voici—ah ! ma chère Mam’selle Alide, que ce Monsieur le marin se fâchait à cause de la gloire, et des beaux vers de notre illustre M. Pierre Corneille !”

“ Here is an English sailor, that I am sure will not deny the merit of an admired writer, even though he come of a nation that is commonly thought hostile, François,” returned his mistress, smiling.—“ Captain Ludlow, it is now a month since I am your debtor, by promise, for a volume of Corneille, and I here acquit myself of the obligation. When you have perused the contents of this book, with the attention they deserve, I may hope—”

“ For a speedy opinion of their merits.”

“ I was about to say, to receive the volume again, as it is a legacy from my father,” steadily rejoined Alida.

“ Legacies and foreign tongues !” muttered

the Alderman. "One is well enough, but for the other, English and Dutch are all that the wisest man need learn. I never could understand an account of profit and loss in any other tongue, Patroon, and even a favourable balance never appears so great as it is, unless the account be rendered in one or the other of these rational dialects. Captain Ludlow, we thank you for your politeness, but here is one of my fellows to tell us that my own periagua is arrived, and wishing you a happy and a long cruise, as we say of lives, I bid you adieu."

The young seaman returned the salutations of the party with a better grace than his previous solicitude to persuade them to enter his ship might have given reason to expect. He even saw them descend the hill, towards the water of the outer bay, with entire composure, and it was only after they had entered a thicket, which hid them from view, that he permitted his feelings to have sway.

Then indeed he drew the volume from his

pocket, and opened its leaves with an eagerness he could no longer control. It seemed as if he expected to read more in the pages than the author had caused to be placed there, but when his eye caught sight of a sealed billet, the legacy of M. de Barbérie fell at his feet, and the paper was torn asunder, with all the anxiety of one who expected to find in its contents a decree of life or death.

Amazement was clearly the first emotion of the young seaman. He read and re-read; struck his brow with his hand; gazed about him at the land and at the water; re-perused the note; examined the superscription, which was simply to "Captain Ludlow, of her Majesty's ship *Coquette*;" smiled; muttered between his teeth; seemed vexed and yet delighted; read the note again, word by word, and finally thrust it into his pocket, with the air of a man, who had found reason for both regret and satisfaction in its contents.

CHAPTER VI.

“What ! has this thing appeared again to-night ?”

Hamlet.

“THE face of man is the log book of his thoughts, and Capt. Ludlow’s seem agreeable,” observed a voice, that came from one who was not far from the commander of the *Coquette*, while the latter was still enacting the pantomime described in the close of the preceding chapter.

“Who speaks of thoughts and log books, or who dares to pry into my movements?” demanded the young sailor, fiercely.

“One who has trifled with the first and scribbled in the last, too often not to know how to meet a squall, whether it be seen in the clouds, or only on the face of man. As for looking into your movements, Captain Ludlow, I have watched too many big ships in my time, to turn aside at each light cruiser, that happens to cross my course. I hope, Sir, you have an answer; every hail has its right to a civil reply.”

Ludlow could scarce believe his senses, when, on turning to face the intruder, he saw himself confronted by the audacious eye and calm mien of the mariner who had, once before that morning, braved his resentment. Curbing his indignation, however, the young man endeavoured to emulate the coolness which, notwithstanding his inferior condition, imparted to the air of the other something that was imposing, if it were not absolutely authoritative. Perhaps the singularity of the adventure aided in effecting an object, that was a little difficult of attainment in one accustomed to receive so much habitual

deference from most of those who made the sea their home. Swallowing his resentment, the young commander answered—

“He that knows how to face his enemies with spirit, may be accounted sufficiently bold; but he who braves the anger of his friends is fool-hardy.”

“And he who does neither, is wiser than both,” rejoined the reckless hero of the sash. “Captain Ludlow, we meet on equal terms, at present, and the parley may be managed with some freedom.”

“Equality is a word that ill applies to men of stations so different.”

“Of our stations and duties it is not necessary to speak. I hope that, when the proper time shall come, both may be found ready to be at the first, and equal to discharge the last. But Captain Ludlow, backed by the broadside of the *Coquette* and the cross-fire of his marines, is not Captain Ludlow alone, on a sea-bluff, with a crutch no better than his own arm and a stout

heart. As the first, he is like a spar supported by backstays and forestays, braces and standing rigging; while, as the latter, he is the stick, which keeps its head aloft by the soundness and quality of its timber. You have the appearance of one who can go alone, even though it blew heavier than at present, if one may judge of the force of the breeze, by the manner it presses on the sails of yonder boat, in the bay."

"Yonder boat begins to feel the wind, truly!" said Ludlow, suddenly losing all other interest, in the appearance of the periagua which held Alida and her friends, and which, at that instant, shot out from beneath the cover of the hill into the broad opening of Rariton Bay. "What think you of the time, my friend? A man of your years should speak with knowledge of the weather."

"Women and winds are only understood when fairly in motion," returned he of the sash; "now any mortal who consulted comfort and the skies, would have preferred a passage in her

Majesty's ship, *Coquette*, to one in yonder dancing periagua; and yet the fluttering silk we see in the boat, tells us there is one who has thought otherwise."

"You are a man of singular intelligence," cried Ludlow, again facing the intruder, "as well as one of singular—"

"Effrontery," rejoined the other, observing that the commander hesitated. "Let the commissioned officer of the *Queen* speak boldly; I am no better than a top-man, or at most a quarter-master."

"I wish to say nothing disagreeable, but I find your knowledge of my offer to convey the lady and her friends to the residence of Alderman Van Beverout, a little surprising."

"And I see nothing to wonder at, in your offer to convey the lady any where, though the liberality to her friends is not an act of so clear explanation. When young men speak from the heart, their words are not uttered in whispers."

"Which would imply that you overheard our

conversation. I believe it, for here is cover at hand to conceal you. It may be, Sir, that you have eyes as well as ears?"

"I confess to have seen your countenance changing sides, like a member of parliament turning to a new leaf in his conscience at the minister's signal, while you overhauled a bit of paper—"

"Whose contents you could not know!"

"Whose contents I took to be some private orders, given by a lady, who is too much of a coquette herself to accept your offer to sail in a vessel of the same name."

"By Heavens, the fellow has reason in his inexplicable impudence!" muttered Ludlow, pacing backward and forward beneath the shadow of the tree. "The language and the acts of the girl are in contradiction, and I am a fool to be trifled with, like a midshipman fresh broken loose from his mother's apron string. Harkee, Master a—a—You've a name, I suppose, like any other straggler on the ocean?"

“Yes. When the hail is loud enough to be heard, I answer to the call of Thomas Tiller.”

“Well then, Master Tiller, so clever a seaman should be glad to serve the Queen.”

“Were it not for duty to another, whose claim comes first, nothing could be more agreeable than to lend a lady in distress a helping hand.”

“And who is he who may prefer a claim to your services in competition with the Majesty of these realms?” demanded Ludlow, with a little of the pretension that, when speaking of its privileges, is apt to distinguish the manner of one who has been accustomed to regard royalty with reverence.

“Myself. When our affairs call us the same way, no one can be readier than I, to keep her Majesty’s company ; but—”

“This is presuming too far on the trifling of a moment,” interrupted Ludlow. “You know, Sirrah, that I have the right to command your services, without entering into a parley for them ;

and which, notwithstanding your gay appearance, may, after all, be little worth the trouble."

"There is no need to push matters to extremity between us, Captain Ludlow," resumed the stranger, who had appeared to muse for a moment. "If I have baffled your pursuit once to-day, it was perhaps to make my merit in entering the ship freely, less undeniable. We are here alone, and your honour will account it no boasting, if I say that a man, well limbed and active, who stands six feet between plank and carline, is not likely to be led against his will, like a yawl towing at the stern of a four-and-forty. I am a seaman, Sir; and though the ocean is my home, I never venture on it without sufficient footing. Look abroad from this hill, and say whether there is any craft in view, except the cruiser of the Queen, which would be likely to suit the taste of a mariner of the long voyage?"

"By which you would have me understand you are here in quest of service?"

"Nothing less; and though the opinion of a

foremast Jack may be of little value, you will not be displeased to hear that I might look further without finding a prettier sea-boat, or a swifter, than the one which sails under your own orders. A seaman of your station, Captain Ludlow, is not now to learn that a man speaks differently, while his name is his own, and after he has given it away to the crown, and therefore I hope my present freedom will not be long remembered."

"I have met men of your humour before, my friend, and I have not now to learn that a thorough man-of-wars-man is as impudent on shore, as he is obedient afloat—Is that a sail in the offing, or is it the wing of a sea-fowl glittering in the sun?"

"It may be either," observed the audacious mariner, turning his eye leisurely towards the open ocean, "for we have a wide look-out from this windy bluff. Here are gulls sporting above the waves that turn their feathers towards the light."

“ Look more seaward. That spot of shining white should be the canvass of some craft, hovering in the offing !”

“ Nothing more probable in so light a breeze. Your coasters are in and out, like water-rats on a wharf, at any hour of the twenty-four—and yet to me it seems the comb of a breaking sea.”

“ ’Tis snow-white duck ; such as your swift rover wears on his loftier spars !”

“ A duck that is flown,” returned the stranger, drily, “ for it is no longer to be seen. These fly-aways, Captain Ludlow, give us seamen many sleepless nights and idle chases. I was once running down the coast of Italy, between the island of Corsica and the Main, when one of these delusions beset the crew, in a manner that hath taught me to put little faith in eyes, unless backed by a clear horizon and a cool head.”

“ I’ll hear the circumstance,” said Ludlow, withdrawing his gaze from the distant ocean,

like one who was satisfied his senses had been deceived. “What of this marvel of the Italian seas?”

“A marvel truly, as your honour will confess, when I read you the affair, much in the words I had it logg’d for the knowledge of all concerned. It was the last hour of the second dog-watch, on Easter Sunday, with the wind here at south-east, easterly. A light air filled the upper canvass, and just gave us command of the ship. The mountains of Corsica, with Monte Christo and Elba, had all been sunk some hours, and we were on the yards, keeping a look-out for a land-fall on the Roman coast. A low thick bank of drifting fog lay along the sea, in-shore of us, which all believed to be the sweat of the land, and thought no more of; though none wished to enter it, for that is a coast where foul airs rise, and through which the gulls and land-birds refuse to fly. Well, here we lay, the mainsail in the brails, the topsails beating the mast heads,

like a maiden fanning herself when she sees her lover, and nothing full but the upper duck, with the sun fairly below the water in the western board. I was then young, and quick of eye as of foot, and therefore among the first to see the sight !”

“ Which was— ?” said Ludlow, interested in spite of his assumed air of indifference.

“ Why, here just above the bank of foul air, that ever rests on that coast, there was seen an object that looked like ribs of bright light, as if a thousand stars had quitted their usual berths in the heaven, to warn us off the land by a supernatural beacon. The sight was in itself altogether out of nature and surprising. As the night thickened it grew brighter and more glowing, as if ’twere meant in earnest to warn us from the coast. But when the word was passed to send the glasses aloft, there was seen a glittering cross on high, and far above the spars on which earthly ships carry their private signals.”

“ This was indeed extraordinary ! And what did you, to come at the character of the heavenly symbol ?”

“ We wore off shore, and left it a clear berth, for bolder mariners. Glad enough was I to see, with the morning sun, the snowy hills of Corsica again !”

“ And the appearance of that object was never explained ?”

“ Nor ever will be. I have since spoke with the mariners of that sea concerning the sight, but never found any who could pretend to have seen it. There was indeed one bold enough to say there is a church far inland, of height and magnitude sufficient to be seen some leagues at sea, and that, favoured by our position and the mists that hung above the low grounds, we had seen its upper works looming above the fogs, and lighted for some brilliant ceremony ; but we were all too old in seamen’s experience to credit so wild a tale. I know not but a church may loom as well as a hill or a ship ; but he who

pretends to say that the hands of man can thus pile stones among the clouds, should be certain of believers, ere he pushes the tale too far."

"Your narrative is extraordinary, and the marvel should have been looked into closer. It may truly have been a church, for there stands an edifice at Rome, which towers to treble the height of a cruiser's masts."

"Having rarely troubled churches, I know not why a church should trouble me," said the mariner of the sash, while he turned his back on the ocean, as if indisposed to regard the waste of water longer. "It is now twelve years since that sight was seen, and though a seaman of many voyages, my eyes have not looked upon the Roman coast from that hour to this. Will your honour lead the way from the bluff, as becomes your rank?"

"Your tale of the burning cross and looming church, Master Tiller, had almost caused me to forget to watch the movements of yon periagua," returned Ludlow, who still continued

to face the bay. “That obstinate old Dutchman—I say, Sir, that Mr. Alderman Van Beverout has greater confidence in this description of craft than I feel myself. I like not the looks of yonder cloud, which is rising from out the mouth of Rariton; and here, seaward, we have a gloomy horizon. By Heaven, there is a sail playing in the offing, or my eye hath lost its use and judgment.”

“Your honour sees the wing of the sporting gull, again; it had been nigh to deceive my sight, which would be to cheat the look-out of a man that has the advantage of some ten or fifteen years more practice in marine appearances. I remember once, when beating in among the islands of the China seas, with the trades here at south-east—”

“Enough of your marvels, friend; the church is as much as I can swallow in one morning. It may have been a gull! for I confess the object small; yet it had the steadiness and size of a distant sail! There is some reason to

expect one on our coast, for whom a bright and seaman's watch must be had."

"This may then leave me a choice of ships," rejoined Tiller. "I thank your honour for having spoken before I had given myself away to the Queen, who is a lady that is much more apt to receive gifts of this nature, than to return them."

"If your respect aboard shall bear any proportion to your hardihood on shore, you may be accounted a model of civility! But a mariner of your pretension, should have some regard to the character of the vessel in which he takes service."

"That of which your honour spoke, is then a buccaneer?"

"If not a buccaneer, one but little better. A lawless trader, under the most favourable view; and there are those who think that he who has gone so far, has not stopped short of the end. But the reputation of the 'Skimmer of the Seas' must be known to one who has navigated the ocean long as you."

“ You will overlook the curiosity of a seafaring man, in a matter of his profession,” returned the mariner of the sash, with strong and evident interest in his manner. “ I am lately from a distant ocean, and though many tales of the buccaneers of the islands have been narrated, I do not remember to have heard of that rover, before his name came into the discourse between me and the schipper of the boat that plies between this landing and the city. I am not altogether what I seem, Captain Ludlow; and when further acquaintance and hard service shall have brought me more before the eyes of my commander, he may not repent having induced a thorough seaman to enter his ship, by a little condescension and good nature shewn while the man was still his own master. Your honour will take no offence at my boldness, when I tell you, I shall be glad to know more of this unlawful trader.”

Ludlow rivetted his eyes on the unmoved

and manly countenance of his companion. There was a vague and undefined suspicion in the look, but it vanished as the practised organs drunk in the assurance, which so much physical promise afforded, of the aid of a bold and active mariner. Rather amused than offended by the freedom of the request, he turned upon his heel, and as they descended the bluff, on their way towards the place of landing, he continued the dialogue.

“ You are truly from a distant ocean,” said the young captain of the *Coquette*, smiling like a man who apologizes to himself for an act of what he thought undue condescension, “ if the exploits of a brigantine known by the name of the ‘ *Water-Witch*,’ and of him who commands her, under the fit appellation of the ‘ *Skimmer of the Seas*,’ have not yet reached your ears. It is now five summers since orders have been in the colonies for the cruisers to be on the alert to hunt the picaroon, and it is even said, the daring smuggler has often

braved the pennants of the narrow seas. 'T would be a bigger ship, if not knighthood, to the lucky officer who should catch the knave!"

"He must drive a money-gaining trade to run these risks, and to brave the efforts of so many skilful gentlemen! May I add to a presumption that your honour already finds too bold, if one may judge by a displeased eye, by asking if report speaks to the face and other particulars of the person of this—free-trader, one must call him, though freebooter should be a better word?"

"What matters the personal condition of a rogue?" said Captain Ludlow, who perhaps remembered that the freedom of their intercourse had been carried as far as comported with prudence.

"What matter truly! I asked because the description answers a little to that of a man I once knew in the seas of farther India, and who has long since disappeared, though no one can say whither he has gone. But this

Skimmer of the Seas is some Spaniard of the Main, or perhaps a Dutchman come from the country that is a-wash, in order to taste of terra firma?"

"Spaniard of the southern coast never carried so bold a sail in these seas, nor was there ever known a Dutchman with so light a heel. The fellow is said to laugh at the swiftest cruiser out of England! As to his figure, I have heard little good of it. 'Tis said he is some soured officer of better days, who has quitted the intercourse of honest men, because roguery is so plainly written on his face, that he vainly tries to hide it."

"Mine was a proper man, and one that need not have been ashamed to shew his countenance among his fellows," said he of the sash. "This cannot be the same, if indeed there be any on the coast. Is't known, your honour, that the man is truly here?"

"So goes a rumour; though so many idle tales have led me before to seek the smuggler

where he was not, that I give but little faith to the report.—The periagua has the wind more at west, and the cloud in the mouth of the Rariton is breaking into scud. The Alderman will have a lucky run of it!”

“And the gulls have gone more seaward, a certain sign of pleasant weather,” returned the other, glancing a quick but keen look over the horizon in the offing. “I believe our rover, with his light duck, has taken flight among them!”

“We will then go in pursuit. My ship is bound to sea, and it is time, Master Tiller, that I know in what berth you are willing to serve the Queen?”

“God bless her Majesty! Anne is a royal lady, and she had a Lord High Admiral for her husband. As for a berth, Sir, one always wishes to be captain, even though he may be compelled to eat his rations in the lee scuppers. I suppose the first lieutenancy is filled to your honour’s liking?”

“ Sirrah, this is trifling ; one of your years and experience need not be told, that commissions are obtained by service.”

“ Under favour,—I confess the error. Captain Ludlow, you are a man of honour, and will not deceive a sailor, who puts trust in your word.”

“ Sailor or landsman, he is safe who has the gage.”

“ Then, Sir, I ask it. Suffer me to enter your ship ; to look into my future messmates, and to judge of their characters ; to see if the vessel suits my humour ; and then to quit her, if I find it convenient.”

“ Fellow !” said Ludlow, “ this impudence almost surpasseth patience !”

“ The request is reasonable, as can be shown ;” gravely returned the unknown mariner. “ Now, Captain Ludlow, of the *Coquette*, would gladly tie himself, for better for worse to a fair lady who is lately gone on the water, and yet there are thousands who might be had with less difficulty.”

“Still deeper and deeper in thy effrontery—and what if this be true?”

“Sir, a ship is a seaman’s mistress—nay, when fairly under a pennant, with a war declared, he may be said to be wedded to her, lawfully or not. He becomes ‘bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, until death doth them part.’ To such a long compact, there should be liberty of choice. Has not your mariner a taste, as well as your lover? The harpings and counter of his ship are the waist and shoulders: the rigging, the ringlets; the cut and fit of the sails, the fashion of the millinery; the guns are always called the teeth, and her paint, is the blush and bloom! Here is matter of choice, Sir, and without leave to make it, I must wish your honour a happy cruise, and the Queen a better servitor.”

“Why, Master Tiller,” cried Ludlow, laughing, “you trust too much to these stunted oaks, if you believe it exceeds my power to hunt you out of their cover, at pleasure. But I

take you at your word. The Coquette shall receive you on these conditions, and with the confidence that a first-rate city belle would enter a country ball-room."

"I follow in your honour's wake, without more words," returned he of the sash, for the first time respectfully raising his canvass cap to the young commander. "Though not actually married, consider me a man betrothed."

It is not necessary to pursue the discourse between the two seamen any further. It was maintained, and with sufficient freedom on the part of the inferior, until they reached the shore, and came in full view of the pennant of the Queen, when, with the tact of an old man-of-war's-man, he threw into his manner all the respect that was usually required by the difference of rank.

Half an hour later the Coquette was rolling at a single anchor, as the puffs of wind came off the hills on her three topsails, and shortly after she was seen standing through the Nar-

rows, with a fresh south-westerly breeze. In all these movements there was nothing to attract attention. Notwithstanding the sarcastic allusions of Alderman Van Beverout, the cruiser was far from being idle, and her passage outward was a circumstance of so common occurrence, that it excited no comment among the boatmen of the bay, and the coasters who alone witnessed her departure.

CHAPTER VII.

“ I am no pilot ; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandize.”

Romeo and Juliet.

A HAPPY mixture of land and water, seen by a bright moon, and beneath the sky of the fortieth degree of latitude, cannot fail to make a pleasing picture. Such was the landscape which the reader must now endeavour to present to his mind.

The wide estuary of Rariton is shut in from the winds and billows of the open sea, by a long, low and narrow cape, or point, which

by a medley of the Dutch and English languages, that is by no means rare in the names of places that lie within the former territories of the United Provinces of Holland, is known by the name of Sandy-Hook. This tongue of land appears to have been made by the unremitting and opposing actions of the waves, on one side; and of the currents of the different rivers that empty their waters into the bay, on the other. It is commonly connected with the low coast of New Jersey, to the south; but there are periods of many years in succession, during which there exists an inlet from the sea, between what may be termed the inner end of the cape, and the main land. During these periods Sandy-Hook of course becomes an island. Such was the fact at the time of which it is our business to write.

The outer, or ocean side of this low and narrow bank of sand, is a smooth and regular beach, like that seen on most of the Jersey coast, while the inner is indented, in a manner

to form several convenient anchoring grounds for ships that seek a shelter from easterly gales. One of the latter is a circular and pretty cove, in which vessels of a light draught are completely embayed, and where they may in safety ride secure from any winds that blow. The harbour, or, as it is always called, the cove, lies at the point where the cape joins the main, and the inlet just named communicates directly with its waters, whenever the passage is open. The Shrewsbury, a river of the fourth or fifth class, or in other words a stream of a few hundred feet in width, and of no great length, comes from the south, running nearly parallel with the coast, and becomes a tributary of the bay, also at a point near the cove. Between the Shrewsbury and the sea, the land resembles that on the cape, being low and sandy, though not entirely without fertility. It is covered with a modest growth of pines and oaks, where it is not either subject to the labours of the husbandman, or in natural meadow. But the

western bank of the river is an abrupt and high acclivity, which rises to the elevation of a mountain. It was near the base of the latter that Alderman Van Beverout, for reasons that may be more fully developed as we proceed in our tale, had seen fit to erect his villa, which, agreeably to a usage of Holland, he had called the *Lust in Rust*; an appellation that the merchant, who had read a few of the classics in his boyhood, was wont to say meant nothing more nor less than ‘*otium cum dignitate*.’

If a love of retirement and a pure air had its influence in determining the selection of the burgher of Manhattan, he could not have made a better choice. The adjoining lands had been occupied early in the previous century by a respectable family of the name of Hartshorne, which continues seated at the place to the present hour. The extent of their possessions served at that day to keep others at a distance. If to this fact be added the formation and quality of the ground, which was at so

early a period of trifling value for agricultural purposes, it will be seen there was as little motive as there was opportunity for strangers to intrude. As to the air, it was refreshed by the breezes of the ocean, which was scarcely a mile distant, while it had nothing to render it unhealthy or impure. With this sketch of the general features of the scene where so many of our incidents occurred, we shall proceed to describe the habitation of the Alderman a little more in detail.

The villa of the Lust in Rust was a low, irregular edifice, in bricks, whitewashed to the colour of the driven snow, and in a taste that was altogether Dutch. There were many gables and weather cocks, a dozen small and twisted chimneys, with numberless facilities that were intended for the nests of storks. These airy sites were, however, untenanted, to the great admiration of the honest architect, who, like many others that bring with them into this hemisphere habits and opinions that are better

suiting to the other, never ceased expressing his surprise on the subject, though all the negroes of the neighbourhood united in affirming there was no such bird in America. In front of the house there was a narrow, but an exceedingly neat lawn, encircled by shrubbery; while two old elms, that seemed coeval with the mountain, grew in the rich soil of which the base of the latter was composed. Nor was there a want of shade on any part of the natural terrace that was occupied by the buildings. It was thickly sprinkled with fruit trees, and here and there was a pine, or an oak of the native growth. A declivity that was rather rapid fell away in front, to the level of the mouth of the river. In short, it was an ample but an unpretending country house, in which no domestic convenience had been forgotten, while it had little to boast of in the way of architecture, except its rusty vanes and twisted chimneys. A few out-houses, for the accommodations of the negroes, were nigh, and nearer to the river there were barns and

stables of dimensions and materials altogether superior to those that the appearance of the arable land, or the condition of the small farm, would seem to render necessary. The periagua, in which the proprietor had made his passage across the outer bay, lay at a small wooden wharf immediately below.

For the earlier hours of the evening, the flashing of candles and a general and noisy movement among the blacks, had denoted the presence of the master of the villa. But the activity had gradually subsided, and before the clock struck nine, the manner in which the lights were distributed, and the general silence, showed that the party, most probably fatigued with their journey, had already separated for the night. The clamour of the negroes had ceased, and the quiet of deep sleep was already prevailing among their humble dwellings.

At the northern extremity of the villa, which, it will be remembered, leaned against the mountain, and facing the east, or fronting the river

and the sea, there stood a little wing, even more deeply embowered in shrubbery and low trees than the other parts of the edifice, and which was constructed altogether in a different style. This was a pavilion erected for the particular accommodation, and at the cost, of la Belle Barbérie. Here the heiress of the two fortunes was accustomed to keep her own little ménage during the weeks passed in the country, and here she amused herself in those pretty and feminine employments that suited her years and tastes. In compliment to the beauty and origin of its inhabitant, the gallant François had christened this particular portion of the villa La Cour des Fées, a name that had gotten into general use, though somewhat corrupted in sound.

On the present occasion, the blinds of the principal apartment of the pavilion were open, and its mistress was still to be seen at one of the windows. Alida was at an age when the sex is most sensible of lively impressions, and

she looked abroad on the loveliness of the landscape, and on the soft stillness of the night, with the pleasure that such a mind is wont to contemplate objects of natural beauty.

There was a young moon, and a firmament glowing with a myriad of stars. The light was shed softly on the water, though, here and there, the ocean glittered with its rays. A nearly imperceptible, but what seamen call a heavy air, came off the sea, bringing with it the refreshing coolness of the hour. The surface of the immense waste was perfectly unruffled, both within and without the barrier of sand that forms the cape; but the body of the element was heaving and setting heavily, in a manner to resemble the sleeping respiration of some being of huge physical frame. The roar of the surf, which rolled up in long and white curls upon the sands, was the only audible sound; but that was heavy and incessant, sometimes swelling on the air, hollow and threatening, and at others dying in dull

and distant murmurs on the ear. There was a charm in these varieties of sound, and in the solemn stillness of such a night, that drew Alida into her little balcony, and she leaned forward, beyond its shadow of sweet-briar, to gaze at a part of the bay that was not visible, in the front view, from her windows.

La Belle Barbérie smiled, when she saw the dim masts and dark hull of a ship, which was anchored near the end of the cape, and within its protection. There was the look of womanly pride in her dark eye, and haply some consciousness of womanly power in the swell of her rich lip, while a taper finger beat the bar of the balcony rapidly, and without consciousness of its employment.

“The loyal Captain Ludlow has quickly ended his cruise!” said the maiden aloud, for she spoke under the influence of a triumph that was too natural to be suppressed. “I shall become a convert to my uncle’s opinions, and think the Queen badly served.”

“ He who serves one mistress faithfully, has no light task,” returned a voice from among the shrubbery that grew beneath and nearly veiled the window ; “ but he who is devoted to two, may well despair of success with both !”

Alidà recoiled, and, at the next instant, she saw her place occupied by the commander of the *Coquette*. Before venturing to cross the low barrier that still separated him from the little parlour, the young man endeavoured to read the eye of its occupant, and then, either mistaking its expression, or bold in his years and hopes, he entered the room.

Though certainly unused to have her apartment scaled with so little ceremony, there was neither apprehension nor wonder in the countenance of the fair descendant of the Huguenot. The blood mantled more richly on her cheek, and the brightness of an eye, that was never dull, increased, while her fine form became firm and commanding.

“I have heard that Captain Ludlow gained much of his renown by gallantry in boarding,” she said, in a voice whose meaning admitted of no misconception, “but I had hoped his ambition was satisfied with laurels so fairly won from the enemies of his country!”

“A thousand pardons, fairest Alida,” interrupted the youth; “you know the obstacles that the jealous watchfulness of your uncle opposes to my desire to speak with you.”

“They are then opposed in vain, for Alderman Van Beverout has weakly believed the sex and condition of his ward would protect her from these coups-de-main.”

“Nay, Alida, this is being more capricious than the winds! You know too well how far my suit is unpleasant to your guardian, to torture a slight departure from cold observances into cause of serious complaint. I had hoped—perhaps, I should say, I have presumed on the contents of your letter, for which I return a thousand thanks; but do not thus cruelly de-

stroy expectations that have so lately been raised beyond the point, perhaps, which reason may justify."

The glow which had begun to subside on the face of la Belle Barbérie again deepened, and for a moment it appeared as if her high self-dependence was a little weakened. After an instant of reflection, however, she answered steadily, though not entirely without emotion.

"Reason, Captain Ludlow, has limited female propriety within narrow limits," she said. "In answering your letter, I have consulted good-nature more than prudence, and I find that you are not slow in causing me to repent the error."

"If I ever cause you to repent confidence in me, sweet Alida, may disgrace in my profession, and the distrust of the whole sex be my punishment! But have I not reason to complain of this inconstancy on your part? Ought I to expect so severe a reprimand—severe, because cold and ironical—for an of-

fence venial as the wish to proclaim my gratitude?"

"Gratitude!" repeated Alida, and this time her wonder was not feigned. "The word is strong, Sir; and it expresses more than an act of courtesy, so simple as that which may attend the lending a volume of popular poetry, can have any right to claim."

"I have strangely misconceived the meaning of the letter, or this has been a day of folly!" said Ludlow, endeavouring to swallow his discontent. "But, no; I have your own words to refute that averted eye and cold look, and, by the faith of a sailor, Alida, I will believe your deliberate and well-reflected thoughts, before these capricious fancies, which are unworthy of your nature. Here are the very words; I shall not easily part with the flattering hopes they convey!"

"La Belle Barbérie now regarded the young man in open amazement. Her colour changed, for of the indiscretion of writing, she knew

she was not guiltless, but of having written in terms to justify the confidence of the other, she felt no consciousness. The customs of the age, the profession of her suitor, and the hour, induced her to look steadily into his face, to see whether the man stood before her in all the decency of his reason. But Ludlow had the reputation of being exempt from a vice that was then but too common among seamen, and there was nothing in his ingenuous and really handsome features, to cause her to distrust his present discretion. She touched a bell, and signed to her companion to be seated.

“François,” said his mistress, when the old valet, but half awake, entered the apartment, “fais-moi le plaisir de m’apporter de cette eau de la fontaine du bosquet, et du vin—le Capitaine Ludlow a soif; et rappelle-toi, bon François, il ne faut pas déranger mon oncle à cette heure; il doit être bien fatigué de son voyage.”

When her respectful and respectable servitor had received his commission and departed, Alida

took a seat herself, in the confidence of having deprived the visit of Ludlow of its clandestine character, and at the same time of having employed the valet on an errand that would leave her sufficient leisure to investigate the inexplicable meaning of her companion.

“You have my word, Captain Ludlow, that this unseasonable appearance in the pavilion is indiscreet, not to call it cruel,” she said, so soon as they were again alone; “but that you have it in any manner to justify your imprudence I must continue to doubt, until confronted by proof.”

“I had thought to have made a very different use of this,” returned Ludlow, drawing a letter—we admit it, with some reluctance in one so simple and so manly—from his bosom; “and even now I take shame in producing it, though at your own orders.”

“Some magic has wrought a marvel, or the scrawl has no such importance,” observed Alida, taking a billet, that she now began to repent

having ever written. "The language of politeness and female reserve must admit of strange perversions, or all who read are not the best interpreters."

La Belle Barbérie ceased speaking, for the instant her eye fell on the paper, an absorbing and intense curiosity got the better of her resentment. We shall give the contents of the letter precisely in the words which caused so much amazement, and possibly some little uneasiness, to the fair creature who was perusing it.

"The life of a seaman," said the paper, in a delicate and beautiful female hand, "is one of danger and exposure. It inspires confidence in woman by the frankness to which it gives birth, and it merits indulgence by its privations. She who writes this is not insensible to the merit of men of this bold calling. Admiration for the sea, and for those who live on it, has been her weakness through life, and her visions of the future, like her recollections of the past, are not entirely exempt from a contemplation of its

pleasures. The usages of different nations, glory in arms, change of scene, with constancy in the affections, all sweetened by affluence, are temptations too strong for a female imagination, and they should not be without their influence on the judgment of man. Adieu.”

This note was read, re-perused, and for the third time, conned, ere Alida ventured to raise her eyes to the face of the expectant young man.

“And this indelicate and unfeminine rhapsody, Captain Ludlow has seen proper to ascribe to me !” she said, while her voice trembled between pride and mortification.

“To whom else can I impute it? No other, lovely Alida, could utter language so charming in words so properly chosen.”

The long lashes of the maiden played quickly above their dark organs, and then conquering feelings that were strangely in contradiction to each other, she said with dignity, turning to a little ebony *écritoire* which lay beside her dressing box,

“ My correspondence is neither very important nor very extensive, but such as it is, happily for the reputation of the writer’s taste, if not for her sanity, I believe it is in my power to show the trifle I thought it decorous to write in reply to your own letter. Here is a copy,” she added, opening what in fact was a draught, and reading aloud—

“ I thank Captain Ludlow for his attention in affording me an opportunity of reading a narrative of the cruel deeds of the buccaneers. In addition to the ordinary feelings of humanity, one cannot but regret that men so heartless are to be found in a profession that is commonly thought to be generous, and tender of the weak. We will, however, hope that the very wicked and cowardly among seamen exist only as foils, to render the qualities of the very bold and manly more conspicuous. No one can be more sensible of this truth than the friends of Captain Ludlow,” the voice of Alida fell a little as she came to this sentence, “ who has not now to

earn a reputation for mercy. In return I send the copy of the Cid, which honest François affirms to be superior to all other poems, not even excepting Homer, a book which I believe he is innocent of calumniating from ignorance of its contents. Again thanking Captain Ludlow for this instance of his repeated attentions, I beg he will keep the volume until he shall return from his intended cruise."

"This note is but a copy of the one you have, or ought to have," said the niece of the Alderman, as she raised her glowing face from leaning over the paper, "though it is not signed, like that, with the name of Alida de Barbérie."

When this explanation was over, both parties sat looking at each other in silent amazement. Still Alida saw, or thought she saw, that notwithstanding the previous professions of her admirer, the young man rejoiced he had been deceived. Respect for delicacy and reserve in the other sex is so general and so natural among

men, that they who succeed the most in destroying its barriers rarely fail to regret their triumph; and he who truly loves can never long exult in any violation of propriety in the object of his affections, even though the concession be made in his own favour. Under the influence of this commendable and healthful feeling, Ludlow, while he was in some respects mortified at the turn affairs had taken, felt sensibly relieved from a load of doubt to which the extraordinary language of the letter he believed his mistress to have written had given birth. His companion read the state of his mind in a countenance that was frank as face of sailor could be, and though secretly pleased to gain her former place in his respect, she was also vexed and wounded that he had ever presumed to distrust her reserve. She still held the inexplicable billet, and her eyes naturally sought the lines. A sudden thought seemed to strike her mind, and returning the paper, she said, coldly—

“Captain Ludlow should know his corres-

pondent better ; I much mistake if this be the first of her communications.”

The young man coloured to the temples, and hid his face for a moment in the hollow of his hands.

“ You admit the truth of my suspicions,” continued la Belle Barbérie, “ and cannot be insensible of my justice, when I add that henceforth—”

“ Listen to me, Alida,” cried the youth, half breathless in his haste to interrupt a decision that he dreaded ; “ hear me, and as Heaven is my judge, you shall hear only truth. I confess this is not the first of the letters written in the same hand—perhaps I should say in the same spirit—but on the honour of a loyal officer I affirm, that until circumstances led me to think myself so happy—so—very happy—”

“ I understand you, Sir ; the work was anonymous until you saw fit to inscribe my name as its author. Ludlow ! Ludlow ! how meanly

have you thought of the woman you profess to love!"

"That were impossible! I mingle little with those who study the finesse of life, and loving as I do my noble profession, Alida, was it so unnatural to believe that another might view it with the same eyes? But since you disavow the letter—nay, your disavowal is unnecessary—I see my vanity has even deceived me in the writing; but since the delusion is over, I confess that I rejoice it is not so."

La Belle Barbérie smiled, and her countenance grew brighter. She enjoyed the triumph of knowing that she merited the respect of her suitor, and it was a triumph heightened by recent mortification. Then succeeded a pause of more than a minute. The embarrassment of the silence was happily interrupted by the return of François.

"Mam'selle Alide, voici de l'eau de la fontaine," said the valet; "mais Monsieur votre oncle s'est couché, et il a mis la clef de la cave

au vin dessous son oreiller. Ma foi, ce n'est pas facile d'avoir du bon vin du tout, en Amérique ; mais après que Monsieur le maire s'est couché, c'est toujours impossible ; voilà !”

“ N'importe, mon cher ; le capitaine va partir, et il n'a plus soif.”

“ Dere is assez de jin,” continued the valet, who felt for the captain's disappointment, “ mais Monsieur Loodle have du goût, an' he n'aime pas so strong liqueur.”

“ He has swallowed already more than was necessary for one occasion,” said Alida, smiling on her admirer in a manner that left him doubtful whether he ought most to repine or to rejoice. “ Thank you, good François ; your duty for the night shall end with lighting the captain to the door.”

Then saluting the young commander in a manner that would not admit of denial, la Belle Barbérie dismissed her lover and the valet together.

“ You have a pleasant office, Monsieur Fran-

çois," said the former, as he was lighted to the outer door of the pavilion ; " it is one that many a gallant gentleman would envy."

" Oui, Sair. It be grand plaisir to serve Mam'selle Alide. Je porte de fan, de book, mais quant au vin, Monsieur le Capitaine, parole d'honneur, c'est toujours impossible après que l'Aldermain s'est couché."

" Ay—the book—I think you had the agreeable duty to-day of carrying the book of la Belle?"

" Vraiment, oui ! "Twas ouvrage de Monsieur Pierre Corneille. On prétend que Monsieur Shak-a-speare en a emprunté d'assez beaux sentiments !"

" And the paper between the leaves?—you were charged also with that note, good François?"

The valet paused, shrugged his shoulders, and laid one of his long yellow fingers on the plane of an enormous aquiline nose while he

seemed to muse. Then shaking his head perpendicularly, he preceded the captain as before, muttering as usual, half in French and half in English—

“For le papier, I know, rien du tout; c’est bien possible, parceque, voyez-vous, Monsieur le Capitaine, Mam’selle Alide did say, prenez-y garde; but I no see him, depuis. Je suppose ’twas beaux compliments écrits on de vers of Mr. Pierre Corneille. Quel génie que celui de cet homme-là!—n’est ce pas, Monsieur?”

“It is of no consequence, good François,” said Ludlow, slipping a guinea into the hands of the valet. “If you should ever discover what became of that paper, however, you will oblige me by letting me know. Good night; mes devoirs à la Belle!”

“Bon soir, Monsieur le Capitaine; c’est un brave Monsieur que celui-là, et de très-bonne famille! Il n’a pas de si grandes terres, que Monsieur le Patteroon, pourtant, on dit, qu’il doit avoir de jolies maisons et assez de rentes

publiques ! J'aime à servir un si généreux et loyal maître, mais, malheureusement, il est marin ! M. de Barbérie n'avait pas trop d'amitié pour les gens de cette profession-là."

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Well, Jessica, go in ;
Perhaps I will return immediately
Do as I bid you,
Shut doors after you :—Fast bind, fast find ;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.”

Merchant of Venice.

THE decision with which la Demoiselle Barbérie had dismissed her suitor, was owing to some consciousness that she had need of opportunity to reflect on the singular nature of the events which had just happened, no less than to a sense of the impropriety of his visiting her at that hour, and in a manner so equivocal. But, like others who act from feverish impulses, when

alone, the maiden repented of her precipitation, and she remembered fifty questions which might aid in clearing the affair of its mystery that she would now gladly put. It was too late, however, for she had heard Ludlow take his leave, and had listened in breathless silence to his footstep as he passed the shrubbery of her little lawn. François reappeared at the door to repeat his wishes for her rest and happiness, and then she believed she was finally alone for the night, since the ladies of that age and country were little apt to require the assistance of their attendants in assuming or in divesting themselves of their ordinary attire.

It was still early, and the recent interview had deprived Alida of all inclination for sleep. She placed the lights in a distant corner of the apartment and approached a window. The moon had so far changed its position as to cast a different light upon the water. The hollow washing of the surf, the dull but heavy breathing of the air from the sea, and the soft shadows

of the trees and mountain, were much the same. The Coquette lay as before at her anchor near the cape, and the Shrewsbury glittered towards the south, until its surface was concealed by the projection of a high and nearly perpendicular bluff.

The stillness was profound, for with the exception of the dwelling of the family who occupied the estate nearest the villa, there was no other habitation within some miles of the place. Still the solitude of the situation was undisturbed by any apprehension of danger, or any tradition of violence from rude and lawless men. The peaceable character of the colonists who dwelt in the interior country was proverbial, and their habits simple, while the ocean was never entered by those barbarians, who rendered some of the seas of the other hemisphere as fearful as they were pleasant.

Notwithstanding this known and customary character of tranquillity, and the lateness of the hour, Alida had not been many moments in her

balcony before she heard the sound of oars. The stroke was measured and the noise low and distant, but it was too familiar to be mistaken. She wondered at the expedition of Ludlow, who was not accustomed to show such haste in quitting her presence, and leaned over the railing to catch a glimpse of his departing boat. Each moment she expected to see the little bark issue from out of the shadows of the land, into the sheet of brightness which stretched nearly to the cruiser. She gazed long and in vain, for no barge appeared, and yet the sound had become inaudible. A light still hung at the peak of the *Coquette*, a sign that the commander was out of his vessel.

The view of a fine ship, seen by the aid of the moon, with its symmetry of spars, and its delicate tracery of cordage, and the heavy and grand movements of the hull as it rolls on the sluggish billows of a calm sea, is ever a pleasing and indeed an imposing spectacle. Alida knew that more than a hundred human beings slept

within the black and silent mass, and her thoughts insensibly wandered to the business of their daring lives, their limited abode, and yet wandering existence, their frank and manly qualities, their devotion to the cause of those who occupied the land, their broken and interrupted connection with the rest of the human family, and finally to those weakened domestic ties, and to that reputation for inconstancy, which are apparently a natural consequence of all. She sighed, and her eye wandered from the ship to that ocean, on which it was constructed to dwell. From the distant, low, and nearly imperceptible shore of the island of Nassau, to the coast of New Jersey, there was one broad and untenanted waste. Even the sea-fowl rested his tired wing, and slept tranquilly on the water. The broad space appeared like some great and unfrequented desert, or rather like a denser and more material copy of the firmament by which it was canopied.

It has been mentioned that a stunted growth of oaks and pines covered much of the sandy

ridge that formed the cape. The same covering furnished a dark setting to the waters of the cove. Above this outline of wood, which fringed the margin of the sea, Alida now fancied she saw an object in motion. At first, she believed some ragged and naked tree, of which the coast had many, was so placed as to deceive her vision, and had thrown its naked lines upon the back-ground of water, in a manner to assume the shape and tracery of a light-rigged vessel. But when the dark and symmetrical spars were distinctly seen, gliding past objects that were known to be stationary, it was impossible to doubt their character. The maiden wondered, and her surprise was not unmixed with apprehension. It seemed as if the stranger, for such the vessel needs be, was recklessly approaching a surf, that, in its most tranquil moments, was dangerous to such a fabric, and that he steered, unconscious of hazard, directly upon the land. Even the movement was mysterious and unusual. Sails

there were none ; and yet the light and lofty spars were soon hid behind a thicket that covered a knoll near the margin of the sea. Alida expected each moment to hear the cry of mariners in distress, and then, as the minutes passed and no such fearful sound interrupted the stillness of the night, she began to bethink her of those lawless rovers who were known to abound among the Carribbean isles, and who were said sometimes even to enter and to refit, in the smaller and more secret inlets of the American continent. The tales, coupled with the deeds, character, and fate of the notorious Kidd, were then still recent, and although magnified and coloured by vulgar exaggerations, as all such tales are known to be, enough was believed by the better instructed, to make his life and death the subject of many curious and mysterious rumours. At this moment she would have gladly recalled the young commander of the Coquette, to apprise him of the enemy that was nigh, and then, ashamed of terrors that she

was fain to hope savoured more of woman's weakness than of truth, she endeavoured to believe the whole some ordinary movement of a coaster, who, familiar with his situation, could not possibly be either in want of aid, or an object of alarm. Just as this natural and consoling conclusion crossed her mind, she very audibly heard a step in her pavilion. It seemed near the door of the room she occupied. Breathless, more with the excitement of her imagination, than with any actual fear created by this new cause of alarm, the maiden quitted the balcony, and stood motionless to listen. The door, in truth, was opened, with singular caution, and, for an instant, Alida saw nothing but a confused area in the centre of which appeared the figure of a menacing and rapacious freebooter.

“Northern lights and moonshine!” growled Alderman Van Beverout, for it was no other than the uncle of the heiress, whose untimely and unexpected visit had caused her so much alarm. “This sky-watching, and turning of

night into day will be the destruction of thy beauty, niece, and then we shall see how plenty Patroons are for husbands! A bright eye and a blooming cheek are thy stock in trade, girl, and she is a spendthrift of both, who is out of her bed when the clock hath struck ten."

"Your discipline would deprive many a beauty of the means of using her power," returned la demoiselle, smiling, as much at the folly of her recent fears, as with affection for her reprovèr. "They tell me that ten is the witching-time of night, for the necromancy of the dames of Europe."

"Witch me no witches! The name reminds one of the cunning Yankees, a race that would outwit Lucifer himself, if left to set the conditions to their bargain. Here is the Patroon, wishing to let in a family of the knaves among the honest Dutchmen of his manor, and we have just settled a dispute between us on this subject, by making the lawful trial."

“ Which it may be proper to hope, dearest uncle, was not the trial by battle ?”

“ Peace and olive-branches, no ! The Patroon of Kinderhook is the last man in the Americas that is likely to suffer by the blows of Myndert Van Beverout. I challenged the boy to hold a fine eel, that the blacks have brought out of the river to help in breaking our morning fasts, that it might be seen if he were fit to deal with the slippery rogues. By the merit of the peaceable St. Nicholas ! but the son of old Hendrick Van Staats had a busy time of it ! The lad griped the fish, as the ancient tradition has it that thy uncle clenched the Holland florin, when thy father put it between my fingers, within the month, in order to see if the true saving grace was likely to abide in the family for another generation. My heart misgave me for a moment, for young Oloff has the fist of a vice, and I thought the goodly names of the Harmans, and Rips, Corneliuses, and Dircks of the manor rent-roll,

were likely to be contaminated by the company of an Increase or a Peleg; but just as the Patroon thought he had the watery viper by the throat, the fish gave an unexpected twist, and slid through his fingers by the tail. Flaws and loop-holes! but, that experiment has as much wisdom as wit in it!"

"And to me, it seemeth better, now that Providence has brought all the colonies under one government, that these prejudices should be forgotten. We are a people sprung from many nations, and our effort should be to preserve the liberality and intelligence, while we forget the weaknesses of all."

"Bravely said, for the child of a Huguenot! But I defy the man who brings prejudice to my door. I like a merry trade, and a quick calculation. Let me see the man in all New England that can tell the colour of a balance sheet quicker than one that can be named, and I'll gladly hunt up the satchel and go to school again. I love a man the better for

looking to his own interests, I ; and yet common honesty teaches us, that there should be a convention between men, beyond which none of reputation and character ought to go."

"Which convention shall be understood, by every man, to be the limits of his own faculties ; by which means the dull may rival the quick of thought. I fear me, uncle, there should be an eel kept on every coast to which a trader comes !"

"Prejudice and conceit child, acting on a drowsy head ; 'tis time thou seekest thy pillow, and in the morning we shall see if young Oloff of the manor shall have better success with thy favour, than with the prototype of the Jonathans. Here, put out these flaring candles, and take a modest lamp to light thee to thy bed. Glaring windows so near midnight, give a house an extravagant name in the neighbourhood."

"Our reputation for sobriety may suffer in the opinion of the eels," returned Alida, laugh-

ing, "but here are few others, I believe, to call us dissipated."

"One never knows—one never knows—" muttered the Alderman, extinguishing the two large candles of his niece, and substituting his own little hand-lamp in their place. "This broad light only invites to wakefulness, while the dim taper I leave, is good as a sleeping draught. Kiss me, wilful one, and draw thy curtains close, for the negroes will soon rise to load the periagua, that they may go up with the tide to the city. The noise of the chattering blackguards may disturb thy slumbers!"

"Truly it would seem, there was little here to invite such active navigation," returned Alida, saluting the cheek of her uncle at his order. "The love of trade must be strong, when it finds the materials of commerce in a solitude like this."

"Thou hast divined the reason child. Thy father Monsieur de Barbérie had his peculiar

opinions on the subject, and doubtless he did not fail to transmit some of them to his offspring. And yet, when the Huguenot was driven from his château and his clayey Norman lands, the man had no distaste himself for an account current, provided the balance was in his own favour. Nations and characters! I find but little difference after all in trade; whether it be driven with a Mohawk for his pack of furs, or with a seigneur who has been driven from his lands. Each strives to get the profit on his own side of the account, and the loss on that of his neighbour. So rest thee well, girl; and remember that matrimony is no more than a capital bargain, on whose success depends the sum-total of a woman's comfort—and so once more, good night.”

La Belle Barbérie attended her uncle dutifully to the door of the pavilion, which she bolted after him, and then finding her little apartment gloomy by the light of the small and feeble lamp he had left, she was pleased

to bring its flame in contact with the wicks of the two candles he had just extinguished. Placing the three near each other on a table the maiden again drew nigh a window. The unexpected interview with the Alderman had consumed several minutes, and she was curious to know more of the unaccountable movements of the mysterious vessel.

The same deep silence reigned about the villa, and the slumbering ocean was heaving and setting as heavily as before. Alida again looked for the boat of Ludlow, but her eye ran over the whole distance of the bright and broad streak between her and the cruiser in vain. There was the slight ripple of the water in the glittering of the moon's rays, but no speck like that the barge would make was visible. The lantern still shone at the cruiser's peak. Once, indeed, she thought the sound of oars was again to be heard, and much nearer than before, and yet no effort of her quick and roving sight could detect the position of the boat. But

to all these doubts succeeded an alarm which sprang from a new and very different source.

The existence of the inlet, which united the ocean with the waters of the cove, was but little known, except to the few whose avocations kept them near the spot. The pass being much more than half the time closed, its varying character, and the little use that could be made of it under any circumstances, prevented the place from being a subject of general interest with the coasters. Even when open, the depth of its water was uncertain, since a week or two of calms, or of westerly winds, would permit the tides to clean its channel, while a single easterly gale was sufficient to choke the entire inlet with sand. No wonder then, that Alida felt an amazement which was not quite free from superstitious alarm, when at that hour, and in such a scene, she saw a vessel gliding, as it were, unaided by sails or sweeps, out of the thicket that fringed the ocean side of the cove, into its very centre.

The strange and mysterious craft was a brigantine of that mixed construction which is much used, even in the most ancient and classical seas of the other hemisphere, and which is supposed to unite the advantages of both a square and of a fore-and-aft-rigged vessel, but which is no where seen to display the same beauty of form and symmetry of equipment as on the coasts of this Union. The first and smallest of its masts had all the complicated machinery of a ship, with its superior and inferior spars, its wider reaching, though light and manageable yards, and its various sails, shaped and arranged to meet every vicissitude and caprice of the winds; while the latter or larger of the two, rose like the straight trunk of a pine from the hull, simple in its cordage, and spreading a single sheet of canvass, that, in itself was sufficient to drive the fabric with vast velocity through the water. The hull was low, graceful in its outlines, dark as the raven's wing, and so modelled as to float on

its element like a sea-gull riding the billows. There were many delicate and attenuated lines among its spars, which were intended to spread broader folds of canvass to the light airs when necessary ; but these additions to the tracery of the machine, which added so much to its beauty by day, were now, seen as it was by the dimmer and more treacherous rays of the moon, scarcely visible. In short, as the vessel had entered the cove floating with the tide, and was so singularly graceful and fairy-like in form, Alida at first sight was fain to discredit her senses, and to believe it no more than some illusion of the fancy. Like most others she was ignorant of the temporary inlet, and under the circumstances, it was not difficult to lend a momentary credence to so pleasing an idea.

But the delusion was only momentary. The brigantine turned in its course, and gliding into the part of the cove where the curvature of the shores offered most protection from the winds and waves, and perhaps from curious eyes,

its motion ceased. A heavy plunge in the water was audible even at the villa, and Alida then knew that an anchor had fallen into the bay.

Although the coast of North America offered little to invite lawless depredation, and it was in general believed to be so safe, yet the possibility that cupidity might be invited by the retired situation of her uncle's villa did not fail to suggest itself to the mind of the young heiress. Both she and her guardian were reputed to be wealthy, and disappointment on the open sea, might drive desperate men to the commission of crimes, that in more prosperous moments would not suggest themselves. The freebooters were said to have formerly visited the coast of the neighbouring island, and men were just then commencing those excavations for hidden treasures and secreted booty, which have been, at distant intervals, continued to our own time.

There are situations in which the mind insensibly gives credit to impressions that the

reason in common disapproves. The present was one in which Alida de Barbérie, though of a resolute and even a masculine understanding, felt disposed to believe there might be truth in those tales, that she had hitherto heard, only to deride. Still keeping her eye on the motionless vessel, she drew back into her window, and wrapped the curtain round her form, undecided whether to alarm the family or not, and acting under a vague impression that, though so distant, her person might be seen. She was hardly thus secreted, before the shrubbery was violently agitated, a footstep was heard in the lawn, beneath her window, and then one leaped so lightly into the balcony, and from the balcony into the centre of the room, that the passage of the figure seemed like the flitting of some creature of supernatural attributes.

CHAPTER IX.

“Why, look you, how you stare!

I would be friends with you, and have your love.”

Shylock.

THE first impulse of Alida, at this second invasion of her pavilion, was certainly to flee. But timidity was not her weakness, and as natural firmness gave her time to examine the person of the individual who had so unceremoniously entered, curiosity aided in inducing her to remain. Perhaps a vague, but a very natural expectation that she was again to dismiss the commander of the *Coquette*, had its

influence on her first decision. In order that the reader may judge how far this boldness was excusable, we shall describe the person of the intruder.

The stranger was one in the very bud of young and active manhood. His years could not have exceeded two and twenty, nor would he probably have been thought so old, had not his features been shaded by a rich brown hue, that in some degree served as a foil to a natural complexion, which though never fair, was still clear and blooming. A pair of dark, bushy, and jet-black silken whiskers, that were in singular contrast to eye-lashes and brows of almost feminine beauty and softness, aided also in giving a decided expression to a face, that might otherwise have been wanting in some of that character which is thought essential to comeliness in man. The forehead was smooth and low, the nose, though prominent and bold in outline, of exceeding delicacy in detail, the mouth and lips full, a little in-

clined to be arch, though the former appeared as if it might at times be pensive; the teeth were even and unsullied, and the chin was small, round, dimpled, and so carefully divested of the distinguishing mark of the sex, that one could fancy nature had contributed all its growth to adorn the neighbouring cheeks and temples. If to these features be added a pair of full and brilliant coal-black eyes, that appeared to vary their expression at their master's will, the reader will at once see, that the privacy of Alida had been invaded by one whose personal attractions might, under other circumstances, have been dangerous to the imagination of a female, whose taste was in some degree influenced by a standard created by her own loveliness.

The dress of the stranger was as unique as his personal attractions were extraordinary. The fashion of the garments resembled that already described as worn by the man who has announced himself as Master Tiller; but

the materials were altogether richer, and, judging only from the exterior, more worthy of the wearer.

The light frock was of a thick purple silk, of an Indian manufacture, cut with exceeding care to fit the fine outlines of a form that was rather round than square; active, than athletic. The loose trousers were of a fine white jean, the cap of scarlet velvet, ornamented with gold, and the body was belted with a large cord of scarlet silk, twisted in the form of a ship's cable. At the ends of the latter, little anchors, wrought in bullion, were attached as gay and fitting appendages.

In contrast to an attire so whimsical and uncommon, however, a pair of small and richly mounted pistols were at the stranger's girdle, and the haft of a curiously carved Asiatic dagger was seen projecting rather ostentatiously from between the folds of the upper garment.

“What cheer! what cheer!” cried a voice,

that was more in harmony with the appearance of the speaker, than with the rough, professional salutation he uttered, so soon as he had fairly landed in the centre of Alida's little saloon. "Come forth, my dealer in the covering of the beaver, for here is one who brings gold to thy coffers. Ha! now that this trio of lights hath done its office, it may be extinguished, lest it pilot others to the forbidden haven!"

"Your pardon, Sir," said the mistress of the pavilion, advancing from behind the curtain, with an air of coolness that her beating heart had nigh betrayed to be counterfeit: "having so unexpected a guest to entertain, the additional candles are necessary."

The start, recoil, and evident alarm of the intruder, lent Alida a little more assurance, for courage is a quality that appears to gain force, in a degree proportioned to the amount in which it is abstracted from the dreaded object. Still, when she saw a hand on a pistol, the maiden was again about to flee, nor was

her resolution to remain confirmed, until she met the mild and alluring eye of the intruder, as quitting his hold of the weapon, he advanced with an air so mild and graceful, as to cause curiosity to take the place of fear.

“Though Alderman Van Beverout be not punctual to his appointment,” said the gay young stranger, “he has more than atoned for his absence by the substitute he sends. I hope she comes authorized to arrange the whole of our treaty?”

“I claim no right to hear, or to dictate in matters not my own. My utmost powers extend to expressing a desire, that this pavilion may be exempt from the discussion of affairs, as much beyond my knowledge as they are separated from my interests.”

“Then why this signal?” demanded the stranger, pointing, with a serious air, to the lights that still burned near each other, in face of an open window. “It is awkward to mislead, in transactions that are so delicate!”

“Your allusion, Sir, is not understood. These lights are no more than what are usually seen in my apartment at this hour—with, indeed, the addition of a lamp, left by my uncle, Alderman Van Beverout—”

“Your uncle !” exclaimed the other, advancing so near Alida, as to cause her to retire a step, his countenance expressing a deep and newly awakened interest—“your uncle !—This, then, is one far-famed and justly extolled—la Belle Barbérie !” he added, gallantly lifting his cap, as if he had just discovered the condition and the unusual personal attractions of his companion.

It was not in nature for Alida to be displeased. All her fancied causes of terror were forgotten, for, in addition to their improbable and uncertain nature, the stranger had sufficiently given her to understand that he was expected by her uncle. If we add, that the singular attraction and softness of his face and voice aided in quieting her fears, we shall probably do no

violence either to the truth, or to a very natural feeling. Profoundly ignorant of the details of commerce, and accustomed to hear its mysteries extolled as exercising the keenest and best faculties of man, she saw nothing extraordinary in those who were actively engaged in the pursuit, having reasons for concealing their movements from the jealousy and rivalry of competitors. Like most of her sex, she had great dependence on the characters of those she loved; and though nature, education, and habit had created a striking difference between the guardian and his ward, their harmony had never been interrupted by any breach of affection.

“ This, then, is la Belle Barbérie !” repeated the young sailor, for such his dress denoted him to be, studying her features with an expression of face, in which pleasure vied with evident and touching melancholy. “ Fame hath done no injustice, for here is all that might justify the folly or madness of man !”

“ This is familiar dialogue for an utter stranger,” returned Alida, blushing, though the quick dark eye that seemed to fathom all her thoughts saw it was not in anger. “ I do not deny that the partiality of friends, coupled with my origin, have obtained the appellation, which is given, however, more in playfulness than in any serious opinion of its being merited—and now, as the hour is getting late, and this visit is at least unusual, you will permit me to seek my uncle.”

“ Stay,” interrupted the stranger—“ it is long—very long, since so soothing, so gentle a pleasure has been mine ! This is a life of mysteries, beautiful Alida, though its incidents seem so vulgar and of every day occurrence. There is mystery in its beginning and its end ; in its impulses ; its sympathies and all its discordant passions. No, do not quit me. I am from off the sea, where none but coarse and vulgar-minded men have long been my asso-

ciates, and thy presence is a balm to a bruised and wounded spirit."

Interested, if possible, more by the touching and melancholy tones of the speaker, than by his extraordinary language, Alida hesitated. Her reason told her that propriety, and even prudence, required she should apprise her uncle of the stranger's presence; but propriety and prudence lose much of their influence, when female curiosity is sustained by a secret and powerful sympathy. Her own eloquent eye met the open and imploring look of organs that seemed endowed with the fabled power to charm, and while her judgment told her there was so much to alarm, her senses pleaded powerfully in behalf of the gentle mariner.

"An expected guest of my uncle will have leisure to repose after the privations and hardships of so weary a voyage," she said. "This is a house whose door is never closed against the right of hospitality."

"If there is aught about my person or attire

to alarm you," returned the stranger, earnestly, "speak, that it may be cast away.—These arms—these foolish arms had better not have been here," he added, casting the pistols and dagger indignantly through a window, into the shrubbery; "ah! if you knew how unwillingly I would harm any—and least of all a woman—you would not fear me!"

"I fear you not," returned la Belle, firmly. "I dread the misconceptions of the world."

"What world is here to disturb us! Thou livest in thy pavilion, beautiful Alida, remote from towns and envy, like some favoured damsel, over whose happy and charmed life presides a benignant genius. See, here are all the pretty materials with which thy sex seeks innocent and happy amusement. Thou touchest this lute, when melancholy renders thought pleasing; here are colours to mock, or to eclipse the beauties of the fields and the mountain, the flower and the tree; and from these pages are culled thoughts, pure, and rich in ima-

gery, as thy spirit is spotless, and thy person lovely !”

Alida listened in amazement, for while he spoke, the young mariner touched the different articles he named, with a melancholy interest, which seemed to say how deeply he regretted that fortune had placed him in a profession in which their use was nearly denied.”

“ It is not common for those who live on the sea to feel this interest in the trifles which constitute a woman’s pleasure,” she said, lingering, spite of her better resolution to depart.

“ The spirit of our rude and boisterous trade is then known to you ?”

“ It were not possible for the relation of a merchant, so extensively known as my uncle, to be ignorant altogether of mariners.”

“ Ay, here is proof of it,” returned the stranger, speaking so quick as again to betray how sensitively his mind was constructed. “ The History of the American Buccaneers is a rare book to be found in a lady’s library ! What

pleasure can a mind like that of la Belle Barbérie find in these recitals of bloody violence?"

"What pleasure, truly!" returned Alida, half tempted, by the wild and excited eye of her companion, notwithstanding all the contradictory evidence which surrounded him, to believe she was addressing one of the very rovers in question. "The book was lent me by a brave seaman, who holds himself in readiness to repress their depredations; and while reading of so much wickedness, I endeavour to recal the devotion of those who risk their lives, in order to protect the weak and innocent.—My uncle will be angered, should I longer delay to apprise him of your presence."

"A single moment! It is long—very long, since I have entered a sanctuary like this! Here is music! and there the frame for the gaudy tambour—these windows look on a landscape soft as thine own nature, and yonder ocean can be admired without dreading its terrific power,

or feeling disgust at its coarser scenes. Thou shouldst be happy here !”

The stranger turned and perceived that he was alone. Disappointment was strongly painted on his handsome face, but ere there was time for second thought, another voice was heard grumbling at the door of the saloon.

“ Compacts and treaties ! What, in the name of good faith, hath brought thee hither ? Is this the way to keep a cloak on our movements, or dost suppose that the Queen will knight me, for being known as thy correspondent ?”

“ Lanterns and false-beacons !” returned the other, mimicking the voice of the disconcerted burgher, and pointing to the lights that still stood where last described. “ Can the port be entered without respecting the land-marks and signals ?”

“ This comes of moonlight and sentiment ! When the girl should have been asleep, she is up, gazing at the stars, and disconcerting

a burgher's speculations. But fear thee not, Master Seadrift; my niece has discretion, and if we have no better pledge for her silence, there is that of necessity, since there is no one here for a confidant, but her old Norman valet, and the Patroon of Kinderhook, both of whom are dreaming of other matter than a little gainful traffic."

"Fear thee not, Alderman," returned the other, still maintaining his air of mockery; "we have the pledge of character, if no other, since the uncle cannot part with reputation, without the niece sharing in the loss."

"What sin is there in pushing commerce a step beyond the limits of the law? These English are a nation of monopolists, and they make no scruple of tying us of the colonies, hand and foot, heart and soul, with their acts of parliament, saying, 'with us shalt thou trade, or not at all.' By the character of the best Burgo-master of Amsterdam, and they came by the

province, too, in no such honesty that we should lie down and obey !”

“ Wherein there is much comfort to a dealer in the contraband. Justly reasoned, my worthy Alderman. Thy logic will, at any time, make a smooth pillow, especially if the adventure be not without its profit. And now, having so commendably disposed of the moral of our bargain, let us approach its legitimate, if not its lawful conclusion. There,” he added, drawing a small bag from an inner pocket of his frock, and tossing it carelessly on a table, “ there is thy gold. Eighty broad Johannes is no bad return for a few packages of furs, and even avarice itself will own that six months is no long investment for the usury ?”

“ That boat of thine, most lively Seadrift, is a marine humming-bird !” returned Myndert, with a joyful tremor of the voice, that betrayed his deep and entire satisfaction. “ Didst say just eighty ? But spare thyself the trouble of looking for the memorandum ; I will tell the

gold myself, to spare thee the trouble. Truly the adventure hath not been bad ! A few kegs of Jamaica, with a little powder and lead, and a blanket or two, with now and then a penny bauble for a chief, are knowingly, ay, and speedily transmuted into the yellow metal by thy good aid.—This affair was managed on the French coast ?”

“ More northward, where the frost helped the bargain. Thy beavers and martens, honest burgher, will be flaunting in the presence of the Emperor, at the next holidays. What is there in the face of the Braganza, that thou studiest it so hard ?”

“ The piece seems none of the heaviest—but luckily I have scales at hand—”

“ Hold !” said the stranger, laying his hand, which, according to a fashion of that day, was clad in a delicate and scented glove, lightly on the arm of the other : “ no scales between us, Sir ! That was taken in return for thy adventure ; heavy or light, it must go down. We

deal in confidence, and this hesitation offends me. Another such doubt of my integrity, and our connection is at an end."

"A calamity I should deplore quite or nearly as much as thyself," returned Myndert, affecting to laugh, though he slipped the suspected doubloon into the bag again, in a manner that at once removed the object of contention from view. "A little particularity in the balance part of commerce serves to maintain friendships. But a trifle shall not cause us to waste the precious time.—Hast brought goods suited to the colonies?"

"In plenty."

"And ingeniously assorted? Colonies and monopoly! but there is a two-fold satisfaction in this clandestine traffic! I never get the notice of thy arrival, Master Seadrift, but the heart within me leapeth of gladness! There is a double pleasure in circumventing the legislation of your London wiseacres!"

"The chiefest of which is—"

“ A goodly return for the investment, truly. —I desire not to deny the agency of natural causes; but trust me, there is a sort of professional glory in thus defeating the selfishness of our rulers. What, are we born of woman to be used as the instruments of their prosperity! Give us equal legislation, a right to decide on the policy of enactments, and then, like a loyal and obedient subject—”

“ Thou wouldst still deal in the contraband !”

“ Well, well, multiplying idle words is not multiplying gold. The list of the articles introduced can be forthcoming?”

“ It is here, and ready to be examined. But there is a fancy come over me, Alderman Van Beverout, which, like others of my caprices, thou knowest must have its way. There should be a witness to our bargain.”

“ Judges and juries! Thou forgettest, man, that a clumsy galliot could sail through the tightest clause of these extra legal compacts.

The courts receive the evidence of this sort of traffic as the grave receives the dead—to swallow all and be forgotten.”

“ I care not for the courts, and little desire do I feel to enter them. But the presence of la Belle Barbérie may serve to prevent any misconceptions that might bring our connection to a premature close. Let her be summoned.”

“ The girl is altogether ignorant of traffic, and it might unsettle her opinions of her uncle’s stability. If a man does not maintain credit within his own doors, how can he expect it in the streets.”

“ Many have credit on the highway who receive none at home. But thou knowest my humour ; no niece—no traffic.”

“ Alida is a dutiful and affectionate child, and I would not willingly disturb her slumbers. Here is the Patroon of Kinderhook, a man who loves English legislation as little as myself—he will be less reluctant to see an honest shilling

turned into gold. I will awake him ; no man was ever yet offended at an offer to share in a profitable adventure."

"Let him sleep on. I deal not with your lords of manors and mortgagees. Bring forth the lady, for there will be matter fit for her delicacy."

"Duty and the ten commandments! You never had the charge of a child, Master Seadrift, and cannot know the weight of responsibility—"

"No niece—no traffic!" interrupted the wilful dealer in contraband, returning his invoice to his pocket and preparing to rise from the table where he had already seated himself. "The lady knows of my presence, and it were safer for us both that she entered more deeply into our confidence."

"Thou art as despotic as the English navigation law! I hear the foot of the child still pacing her chamber and she shall come. But

there need be no explanations to recal old intercourse. The affair can pass as a bit of accidental speculation—a by-play in the traffic of life.”

“As thou pleasest. I shall deal less in words than in business. Keep thine own secrets, burgher, and they are safe. Still I would have the lady, for there is a presentiment that our connection is in danger.”

“I like not that word presentiment,” grumbled the Alderman, taking a light and snuffing it with deliberate care; “drop but a single letter and one dreams of the pains and penalties of the exchequer. Remember thou art a trafficker, who conceals his appearance on account of the cleverness of his speculations!”

“That is my calling to the letter. Were all others as clever, the trade would certainly cease—Go, bring the lady.”

The Alderman, who probably saw the necessity of making some explanation to his niece,

and who, it would seem, fully understood the positive character of his companion, no longer hesitated ; but first casting a suspicious glance out of the still open window, he left the room.

CHAPTER X.

“ Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,
To be ashamed to be my father’s child !
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners.”

Merchant of Venice.

THE moment the stranger, was again alone, the entire expression of his countenance underwent a change. The reckless and bold expression deserted his eye, which once more became soft, if not pensive, as it wandered over the different elegant objects that served to amuse the leisure of la Belle Barbérie. He arose and touched the strings of a lute, and then, like

Fear, started back, as if recoiling at the sound he had made. All recollection of the object of his visit was evidently forgotten in a new and livelier interest, and had there been one to watch his movements, the last motive imputed to his presence would probably have been the one that was true. There was so little of that vulgar and common character which is usually seen in men of his pursuit in the gentle aspect and subdued air of his fine features, that it might be fancied he was thus singularly endowed by nature, in order that deception might triumph. If there were moments when a disregard of opinion was seen in his demeanour, it rather appeared assumed than easy, and even when most disposed to display lawless indifference to the ordinary regulations of society in his interview with the Alderman, it had been blended with a reserve of manner that was strangely in contrast to his humour.

On the other hand, it were idle to say that Alida de Barbérie had no unpleasant suspicions

concerning the character of her uncle's guest. That baneful influence which necessarily exerts itself near an irresponsible power, coupled with the natural indifference with which the principal regards the dependent, had caused the English ministry to fill too many of their posts of honour and profit in the colonies with needy and dissolute men of rank, or of high political connexions at home. The province of New York had in this respect been particularly unfortunate. The gift of Charles to his brother and successor had left it without the protection of those charters and other privileges that had been granted to most of the governments of America. The connection with the crown was direct; and for a long period the majority of the inhabitants were considered as of a different race, and of course as of one less to be considered than that of their conquerors. Such was the laxity of the times on the subject of injustice to the people of this hemisphere, that the predatory expeditions of Drake and others against the wealthy occupants

of the more southern countries seem to have left no spots on their escutcheons, and the honours and favours of Queen Elizabeth had been liberally extended to men who would now be deemed freebooters. In short, that system of violence and specious morality which commenced with the gifts of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the bulls of the popes, was continued with more or less of modification, until the descendants of those single-minded and virtuous men who peopled the Union took the powers of government into their own hands, and proclaimed political ethics that were previously as little practised as understood.

Alida knew that both the Earl of Bellamont and the unprincipled nobleman who has been introduced in the earlier pages of this tale, had not escaped the imputation of conniving at acts on the sea far more flagrant than any of an unlawful trade; and it will therefore create little surprise that she saw reason to distrust the legality of some of her uncle's speculations with

less pain than might be felt by one of her sex and opinions at the present hour. Her suspicions however fell far short of the truth, for it were scarce possible to have presented a mariner, who bore about him fewer of those signs of his rude calling than he whom she had so unexpectedly met.

Perhaps, too, the powerful charm that existed in the voice and countenance of one so singularly gifted by nature, had its influence in persuading Alida to reappear. At all events she was soon seen to enter the room with an air that manifested more of curiosity and wonder than of displeasure.

“ My niece has heard that thou comest from the old countries, Master Seadrift,” said the wary Alderman, who preceded Alida, “ and the woman is uppermost in her heart. Thou wilt never be forgiven should the eye of any maiden in Manhattan get sight of thy finery before she has passed judgment on its merit.”

“ I cannot wish a more impartial or a fairer

judge," returned the other, doffing his cap in the gallant and careless manner of his trade. "Here are silks from the looms of Tuscany, and Lyonnais brocades, that any Lombard or dame of France might envy. Ribbons of every hue and dye, and laces that seem to copy the fret-work of the richest cathedral of your Fleming!"

"Thou hast journeyed much in thy time, Master Seadrift, and speakest of countries and usages with understanding," said the Alderman. "But how stand the prices of these precious goods? Thou knowest the long war, and the moral certainty of its continuance; this German succession to the throne, and the late earthquakes in the country, too, have much unsettled prices, and cause us thoughtful burghers to be wary in our traffic. Didst inquire the cost of geldings when last in Holland?"

"The animals go a-begging. As to the value of my goods, that you know is fixed; for I admit of no parley between friends."

“Thy obstinacy is unreasonable, Master Seadrift. A wise merchant will always look to the state of the market, and one so practised should know that a nimble sixpence multiplies faster than a slow-moving shilling. 'Tis the constant rolling of the ball that causes the snow to cleave. Goods that come light should not go heavy, and quick settlements follow sudden bargains. Thou knowest our York saying, that ‘first offers are the best.’”

“He that likes may purchase, and he that prefers his gold to fine laces, rich silks, and stiff brocades, has only to sleep with his money-bags under his pillow. There are others who wait with impatience to see the articles, and I have not crossed the Atlantic with a freight that scarcely ballasts the brigantine, to throw away the valuables on the lowest bidder.”

“Nay, uncle,” said Alida, in a little trepidation, “we cannot judge of the quality of Master Seadrift’s articles by report. I dare to

say he has not landed without a sample of his wares?"

"Custom and friendships!" muttered Myn-
dert, "of what use is an established correspon-
dence, if it is to be broken on account of a little
cheapening? But produce thy stores, Mr. Dog-
matism; I warrant me the fashions are of some
rejected use, or that the colour of the goods be
impaired by the usual negligence of thy careless
mariners. We will, at least, pay thee the com-
pliment to look at the effects."

"'Tis as you please," returned the other.
"The bales are in the usual place, at the wharf,
under the inspection of honest Master Tiller;
but if so inferior in quality, they will scarce re-
pay the trouble of the walk."

"I'll go, I'll go," said the Alderman, adjust-
ing his wig and removing his spectacles; "'twould
not be treating an old correspondent well, to re-
fuse to look at his samples,—thou wilt follow,
Master Seadrift, and so I will pay thee the com-

pliment to examine the effects—though the long war, the glut of furs, the over-abundance of the last year's harvests, and the perfect quiet in the mining districts, have thrown all commerce flat on its back. I'll go, however, lest thou shouldst say thy interests were neglected. Thy Master Tiller is an indiscreet agent; he gave me a fright to-day, that exceeds any alarm I have felt since the failure of Van Halt, Balance and Diddle."

The voice of Myndert became inaudible, for, in his haste not to neglect the interests of his guest, the tenacious trader had already quitted the room, and half of his parting speech was uttered in the ante-chamber of the pavilion.

"'Twould scarce comport with the propriety of my sex to mingle with the seamen, and the others who doubtless surround the bales?" said Alida, in whose face there was a marked expression of hesitation and curiosity.

"It will not be necessary," returned her com-

panion. "I have, at hand, specimens of all that you would see. But why this haste? We are yet in the early hours of the night, and the Alderman will be occupied long, ere he comes to the determination to pay the prices my people are sure to ask. I am lately from off the sea, beautiful Alida, and thou canst not know the pleasure I find in breathing even the atmosphere of a woman's presence."

La Belle Barbérie retired a step or two, she knew not why, and her hand was placed upon the cord of the bell, before she was aware of the manner in which she betrayed her alarm.

"To me it does not seem that I am a creature so terrific that thou needst dread my presence," continued the gay mariner, with a smile that expressed as much of secret irony, as of that pensive character which had again taken possession of his countenance; "but ring, and bring your attendants to relieve fears that are natural to thy sex, and therefore seducing to mine.

Shall I pull the cord?—for this pretty hand trembles too much to do its office.”

“I know not that any would answer, for it is past the hour of attendance;—it is better that I go to the examination of the bales.”

The strange, and singularly attired being, who occasioned so much uneasiness to Alida, regarded her for a moment with a kind and melancholy solicitude.

“Thus they are all, till altered by too much intercourse with a cold and corrupt world!” he rather whispered, than uttered aloud. “Would that thus they might all continue! Thou art a singular compound of thy sex’s weakness and of manly resolution, Belle Barbérie; but trust me,” and he laid his hand on his heart with an earnestness that spoke well for his sincerity; “ere word, or act, to harm or to offend thee, should proceed from any who obey will of mine, nature itself must undergo a change. Start not, for I call one to show the specimens you would see.”

He then applied a little silver whistle to his lips, and drew a low signal from the instrument, motioning to Alida to await the result without alarm. In half a minute, there was a rustling among the leaves of the shrubbery, a moment of attentive pause, and then a dark object entered the window and rolled heavily to the centre of the floor.

“Here are our commodities, and trust me the price shall not be dwelt on between us,” resumed Master Seadrift, undoing the fastenings of the little bale that had entered the saloon, seemingly without the aid of hands. “These goods are so many gages of neutrality between us, so approach and examine without fear. You will find some among them to reward the hazard.”

The bale was now open, and as its master appeared to be singularly expert in suiting a female fancy, it became impossible for Alida to resist any longer. She gradually lost her reserve as the examination proceeded; and before the owner of the treasures had got into the third of his

packages, the hands of the heiress were as actively employed as his own in gaining access to their view.

“This is a stuff of the Lombard territories,” said the vender of the goods, pleased with the confidence he had succeeded in establishing between his beautiful customer and himself; “thou seest it is rich, flowery, and variegated as the land it came from. One might fancy the vines and vegetation of that deep soil were shooting from this labour of the loom—nay, the piece is sufficient for any toilette, however ample; see, it is endless as the plains that reared the little animal who supplies the texture. I have parted of that fabric to many dames of England, who have not disdained to traffic with one that risks much in their behalf.”

“I fear there are many who find a pleasure in these stuffs, chiefly because their use is forbidden.”

“’T would not be out of nature! Look; this

box contains ornaments of the elephant's tooth, cut by a cunning artificer in the far Eastern lands; they do not disfigure a lady's dressing-table, and have a moral, for they remind her of countries where the sex is less happy than at home. Ah! here is a treasure of Mechlin, wrought in a fashion of my own design."

"'Tis beautifully fancied! and might do credit to one who professed the painter's art."

"My youth was much employed in these conceits," returned the trader, unfolding the rich and delicate lace in a manner to show that he had still pleasure in contemplating its texture and quality. "There was a compact between me and the maker, that enough should be furnished to reach from the high church tower of his town, to the pavement beneath; and yet you see how little remains! The London dames found it to their taste, and it was not easy to bring even this trifle into the colonies."

"You chose a remarkable measure for an

article that was to visit so many different countries without the formalities of law ?”

“ We thought to start in the favour of the church, which rarely frowns on those who respect its privileges. Under the sanction of such authority, I will lay aside all that remains, certain it will be needed for thy use.”

“ So rare a manufacture should be costly ?”

La Belle Barbérie spoke hesitatingly, and as she raised her eyes, they met the dark organs of her companion fixed on her face, in a manner that seemed to express a consciousness of the ascendancy he was gaining. Startled at she knew not what, the maiden again added hastily,—

“ This may be fitter for a court lady than a girl of the colonies ?”

“ None who have yet worn of it so well become it ; — I lay it here as a make-weight in my bargain with the Alderman.—This is satin of Tuscany ; a country where nature exhibits its extremes, and one whose merchants

were princes. Your Florentine was subtle in his fabrics, and happy in his conceits of forms and colours, for which he stood indebted to the riches of his own climate. Observe, the hue of this glossy surface is scarcely so delicate as I have seen the rosy light at even, playing on the sides of his Appenines !”

“ You have then visited the regions in whose fabrics you deal ?” said Alida, suffering the articles to fall from her hand, in the stronger interest she began to feel in their owner.

“ ’Tis my habit. Here have we a chain from the city of the isles. The hand of Venetian could alone form these delicate and nearly insensible links. I refused a string of spotless pearls for that same golden web.”

“ It was indiscreet in one who trades at so much hazard ?”

“ I kept the bauble for my pleasure !—Whim is sometimes stronger than the thirst of gain ; and this chain does not quit me, till I bestow it on the lady of my love.”

“ One so actively employed, can scarce spare time to seek a fitting object for the gift.”

“ Is merit and loveliness in the sex so rare ! La Belle Barbérie speaks in the security of many conquests, or she would not deal thus lightly in a matter that is so serious with most females !”

“ Among other countries, your vessel hath visited a land of witchcraft, or you would not pretend to a knowledge of things, that in their very nature must be hidden from a stranger.—Of what value may be those beautiful feathers of the ostrich ?”

“ They came of swarthy Africa, though so spotless themselves. The bunch was had by secret traffic from a Moorish man, in exchange for a few skins of *lachrymæ christi*, that he swallowed with his eyes shut. I dealt with the fellow, only in pity for his thirst, and do not pride myself on the value of the commodity. It shall go too, to quicken love between me and thy uncle.”

Alida could not object to this liberality, though she was not without a secret opinion that the gifts were no more than delicate and well-concealed offerings to herself. The effect of this suspicion was two-fold; it caused the maiden to become more reserved in the expression of her tastes, though it in no degree lessened her confidence in, and admiration of the wayward and remarkable trader.

“ My uncle will have cause to commend thy generous spirit,” said the heiress, bending her head a little coldly at this repeated declaration of her companion’s intentions, “ though it would seem that in trade, justice is as much to be desired as generosity;—this seemeth a curious design wrought with the needle ?”

“ It is the labour of many a day, fashioned by the hand of a recluse. I bought it of a nun in France, who passed years in toil upon the conceit, which is of more value than the material. The meek daughter of solitude wept when she parted with the fabric, for in her

eyes, it had the tie of association and habit. A companion might be lost, to one who lives in the confusion of the world, and it should not cause more real sorrow than parting from the product of her needle gave that mild resident of the cloisters !”

“ And is it permitted for your sex to visit those places of religious retirement ?” asked Alida. “ I come of a race that pays little deference to monastic life, for we are refugees from the severity of Louis, but yet I never heard my father charge these females with being so regardless of their vows.”

“ The fact was so repeated to me, for surely my sex are not admitted to traffic directly with the modest sisters” (a smile that Alida was half disposed to think bold, played about the handsome mouth of the speaker) ; “ but it was so reported. What is your opinion of the merit of woman, in thus seeking refuge from the cares, and haply from the sins of the world, in institutions of this order ?”

“Truly, the question exceedeth my knowledge. This is not a country to immure females, and the custom causes us of America little thought.”

“The usage hath its abuses,” continued the dealer in contraband, speaking thoughtfully; “but it is not without its good. There are many of the weak and vain that would be happier in the cloisters, than if left to the seductions and follies of life;—ah, here is work of English hands. I scarcely know how the articles found their way into the company of the products of the foreign looms. My bales contain, in general, little that is vulgarly sanctioned by the law. Speak me frankly, Belle Alida, and say if you share in the prejudices against the character of us free-traders?”

“I pretend not to judge of regulations that exceed the knowledge and practices of my sex,” returned the maiden with commendable reserve. “There are some who think the abuse of

power a justification of its resistance, while others deem a breach of law to be a breach of morals."

"The latter is the doctrine of your man of invested monies and established fortune! He has entrenched his gains behind acknowledged barriers, and he preaches their sanctity, because they favour his selfishness. We skimmers of the sea—"

Alida started so suddenly, as to cause her companion to cease speaking.

"Are my words frightful, that you pale at their sound?"

"I hope they were used rather in accident than with their dreaded meaning. I would not have it said—no! 'tis but a chance that springs from some resemblance in your callings. One like you can never be the man whose name has grown into a proverb?"

"One like me, beautiful Alida, is much as fortune wills. Of what man, or of what name wouldst speak?"

“ ’Tis nothing,” returned la Belle Barbérie, gazing unconsciously at the polished and graceful features of the stranger longer than was wont in maiden. “ Proceed with your explanation ;—these are rich velvets !”

“ They come of Venice, too ; but commerce is like the favour which attends the rich, and the Queen of the Adriatic is already far on the decline. That which causes the increase of the husbandman, occasions the downfall of a city. The lagunes are filling with fat soil, and the keel of the trader is less frequent there than of old. Ages hence the plough may trace furrows where the Bucentaur has floated ! The outer India passage has changed the current of prosperity, which ever rushes in the widest and newest track. Nations might learn a moral by studying the sleepy canals and instructive magnificence of that fallen town ; but pride fattens on its own lazy recollections to the last !—As I was saying, we rovers deal little in musty maxims, that are made by the great and prosperous at

home, and are trumpeted abroad, in order that the weak and unhappy should be the more closely riveted in their fetters."

"Methinks you push the principle further than is necessary, for one whose greatest offence against established usage is a little hazardous commerce. These are opinions that might unsettle the world."

"Rather settle it, by referring all to the rule of right. When governments shall lay their foundations in natural justice, when their object shall be to remove the temptations to err, instead of creating them, and when bodies of men shall feel and acknowledge the responsibilities of individuals—why, then the Water Witch herself might become a revenue cutter, and her owner an officer of the customs!"

The velvet fell from the hands of la Belle Barbérie, and she arose from her seat in precipitation.

"Speak plainly," said Alida, with all her

natural firmness; “with whom am I about to traffic?”

“An outcast of society—a man condemned in the opinions of the world—the outlaw—the flagrant wanderer of the ocean—the lawless Skimmer of the Seas!” cried a voice at the open window.

In another minute, Ludlow was in the room. Alida uttered a shriek, veiled her face in her robe, and rushed from the apartment.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Truth will come to light ;
Murder cannot be hid long, a man’s son may ;
But in the end, truth will out.”

Launcelot.

THE officer of the Queen had leaped into the pavilion, with the flushed features and all the hurry of an excited man. The exclamations and retreat of la Belle Barbérie, for a single moment diverted his attention, and then he turned suddenly, not to say fiercely, towards her companion. It is not necessary to repeat the description of the stranger’s person, in order to render the change which instantly

occurred in the countenance of Ludlow, intelligible to the reader. His eye at first refused to believe there was no other present, and when it had again and again searched the whole apartment, it returned to the face and form of the dealer in contraband with an expression of incredulity and wonder.

“Here is some mistake!” exclaimed the commander of the *Coquette*, after time had been given for a thorough examination of the room.

“Your gentle manner of entrance,” returned the stranger, across whose face there had passed a glow, that might have come equally of anger or of surprise, “has driven the lady from the room. But as you wear the livery of the Queen, I presume you have authority for invading the dwelling of the subject?”

“I had believed—nay, there was reason to be certain, that one whom all of proper loyalty execrate, was to be found here,” stammered the still confused Ludlow. “There

can scarce be a deception, for I plainly heard the discourse of my captor's,—and yet here is none !”

“ I thank you for the high consideration you bestow on my presence.”

The manner, rather than the words of the speaker, induced Ludlow to rivet another look on his countenance. There was a mixed expression of doubt, admiration, and possibly of uneasiness, if not of actual jealousy, in the eye which slowly read all his lineaments, though the former seemed the stronger sensation of the three.

“ We have never met before !” cried Ludlow, when the organ began to grow dim with the length and steadiness of its gaze.

“ The ocean has many paths, and men may journey on them long, without crossing each other.”

“ Thou hast served the Queen, though I see thee in this doubtful situation ?”

“ Never. I am not one to bind myself to

the servitude of any woman that lives," returned the free-trader, while a wild smile played about his lip, "though she wore a thousand diadems! Anne never had an hour of my time, nor a single wish of my heart."

"This is bold language, Sir, for the ear of her officer. The arrival of an unknown brigantine, certain incidents which have occurred to myself this night, your presence here, that bale of articles forbidden by the law, create suspicions that must be satisfied. Who are you?"

"The flagrant wanderer of the ocean—the outcast of society—the condemned in the opinions of the world—the lawless Skimmer of the Seas!"

"This cannot be! The tongues of men speak of the personal deformity of that wanderer no less than of his bold disregard of the law. You would deceive me?"

"If then men err so much in that which is visible and unimportant," returned the other, proudly, "is there not reason to doubt their

accuracy in matters of more weight? I am surely what I seem, if I am not what I say."

"I will not credit so improbable a tale;— give me some proof that what I hear is true."

"Look at that brigantine, whose delicate spars are almost confounded with the background of trees," said the other, approaching the window, and directing the attention of his companion to the cove. "'Tis the bark that has so often foiled the efforts of all thy cruisers, and which transports me and my wealth whither I will, without the fetters of arbitrary laws, and the meddling inquiries of venal hirelings. The scud which floats above the sea, is not freer than that vessel, and scarcely more swift. Well is she named the Water Witch! for her performances on the wide ocean have been such as seem to exceed all natural means. The froth of the sea does not dance more lightly above the waves, than yonder graceful fabric when driven by the breeze. She is a thing to be loved, Ludlow; trust me, I never yet set affections on

woman, with the warmth I feel for the faithful and beautiful machine !”

“ This is little more than any mariner could say in praise of a vessel that he admired.”

“ Will you say it, Sir, in favour of yon lumbering sloop of Queen Anne ? Your Coquette is none of the fairest, and there was more of pretension than of truth at her christening.”

“ By the title of my royal mistress, young beardless, but there is an insolence in this language that might become him you wish to represent ! My ship, heavy or light of foot, as she may be, is fated to bring yonder false trader to the judgment.”

“ By the craft and qualities of the Water Witch, but this is language that might become one who was at liberty to act his pleasure,” returned the stranger, tauntingly imitating the tone in which his angry companion had spoken.

“ You would have proof of my identity ? listen. There is one who vaunts his power, that forgets he is a dupe of my agent, and that even

while his words are so full of boldness, he is a captive !”

The brown cheek of Ludlow reddened, and he turned toward the lighter and far less vigorous frame of his companion, as if about to strike him to the earth, when a door opened, and Alida appeared in the saloon.

The meeting between the commander of the *Coquette* and his mistress, was not without embarrassment. The anger of the former and the confusion of the latter, for a moment kept both silent ; but as *la Belle Barbérie* had not returned without an object, she was quick to speak.

“ I know not whether to approve or to condemn the boldness that has prompted Captain Ludlow to enter my pavilion at this unseasonable hour, and in so unceremonious a manner,” she said, “ for I am still ignorant of his motive. When he shall please to let me hear it, I may judge better of the merit of the excuse.”

“ True, we will hear his explanation before condemnation,” added the stranger, offering a seat to Alida, which she coldly declined. “ Beyond a doubt, the gentleman has a motive.”

If looks could have destroyed, the speaker would have been annihilated. But as the lady seemed indifferent to the last remark, Ludlow prepared to enter on his vindication.

“ I shall not attempt to conceal that an artifice has been practised,” he said, “ which is accompanied by consequences that I find awkward. The air and manner of the seaman whose bold conduct you witnessed in the boat, induced me to confide in him more than was prudent, and I have been rewarded by deception.”

“ In other words, Captain Ludlow is not as sagacious as he had reason to believe!” said an ironical voice at his elbow.

“ In what manner am I to blame, or why is my privacy to be interrupted, because a wandering seaman has deceived the commander of

the Coquette?" rejoined Alida. "Not only that audacious mariner, but this—this person," she added, adopting a word that use has appropriated to the multitude, "is a stranger to me. There is no other connection between us than that you see."

"It is not necessary to say why I landed," continued Ludlow; "but I was weak enough to allow that unknown mariner to quit my ship, in my company, and when I would return he found means to disarm my men and make me a prisoner."

"And yet art thou, for a captive, tolerably free!" added the ironical voice.

"Of what service is this freedom, without the means of using it? The sea separates me from my ship, and my faithful boat's crew are in fetters. I have been little watched myself; but though forbidden to approach certain points, enough has been seen to leave no doubts of the character of those whom Alderman Van Bever-out entertains."

“Thou wouldst also say, and his niece, Ludlow?”

“I would say nothing harsh to, or disrespectful of Alida de Barbérie. I will not deny that a harrowing idea possessed me,—but I see my error, and repent having been so hasty.”

“We may then resume our commerce,” said the trader, coolly seating himself before the open bale, while Ludlow and the maiden stood regarding each other in mute surprise. “It is pleasant to exhibit these forbidden treasures to an officer of the Queen! It may prove the means of gaining the royal patronage. We were last among the velvets, and on the lagunes of Venice. Here is of a colour and quality to form a bridal dress for the Doge himself, in his nuptials with the sea! We men of the ocean look upon that ceremony as a pledge Hymen will not forget us, though we may wander from his altars. Do I justice to the faith of the craft, Captain Ludlow?—or are you a sworn devotee of Neptune, and content to breathe your sighs

to Venus, when afloat? Well, if the damps and salt air of the ocean rust the golden chain, it is the fault of cruel Nature!—Ah! here is—”

A shrill whistle sounded among the shrubbery, and the speaker became mute. Throwing his cloths carelessly on the bale, he arose again, and seemed to hesitate. Throughout the interview with Ludlow, the air of the free-trader had been mild, though, at times, it was playful, and not for an instant had he seemed to return the resentment which the other had so plainly manifested. It now became perplexed, and by the workings of his features, it would seem that he vacillated in his opinions. The sounds of the whistle were heard again.

“Ay, ay, Master Tom,” muttered the dealer in contraband; “thy note is audible, but why this haste? Beautiful Alida, this shrill summons is to say, that the moment of parting is arrived!”

“We met with less of preparation,” returned

la Belle Barbérie, who preserved all the distant reserve of her sex, under the jealous eyes of her admirer.

“We met without a warning, but shall our separation be without a memorial? Am I to return with all these valuables to the brigantine, or, in their place, must I take the customary golden tribute?”

“I know not that I dare make a traffic which is not sanctioned by the law, in presence of a servitor of the Queen,” returned Alida, smiling. “I will not deny that you have much to excite a woman’s envy, but our royal mistress might forget her sex, and show little pity were she to hear of my weakness.”

“No fear of that, lady. ’Tis they who are most stern in creating these harsh regulations, that show most frailty in their breach. By the virtues of honest Leadenhall itself, but I should like to tempt the royal Anne in her closet with such a display of goodly laces and heavy brocades!”

“That might be more hazardous than wise!”

“I know not. Though seated on a throne, she is but woman. Disguise nature as thou wilt, she is a universal tyrant, and governs all alike. The head that wears a crown dreams of the conquests of the sex, rather than of the conquests of states; the hand that wields the sceptre is fitted to display its prettiness with the pencil or the needle; and though words and ideas may be taught and sounded forth with the pomp of royalty, the tone is still that of woman.”

“Without bringing into question the merits of our present royal mistress,” said Alida, who was a little apt to assert her sex’s rights, “there is the example of the glorious Elizabeth to refute this charge.”

“Ay, we have had our Cleopatras in the sea-fight, and fear was found stronger than love! The sea has monsters, and so may have the land. He that made the earth, gave it laws that ’tis not good to break. We men are

jealous of our qualities, and little like to see them usurped; and trust me, lady, she that forgets the means that Nature bestows, may mourn in sorrow over the fatal error!—But, shall we deal in velvet, or is your taste more leaning to brocade?”

Alida and Ludlow listened in admiration to the capricious and fanciful language of the unaccountable trader, and both were equally at a loss to estimate his character. The equivocal air was in general well maintained, though the commander of the *Coquette* had detected an earnestness and feeling in his manner, when he more particularly addressed *la Belle Barbérie*, that excited an uneasiness he was ashamed to admit, even to himself. That the maiden herself observed this change, might also be inferred from a richer glow which diffused itself over her features, though it is scarce probable that she was conscious of its effects. When questioned as to her determination concerning his goods, she

again regarded Ludlow doubtingly ere she answered.

“That you have not studied woman in vain,” she laughingly replied, “I must fain acknowledge. And yet, ere I make a decision, suffer me to consult those who, being more accustomed to deal with the laws, are better judges of the propriety of the purchases?”

“If this request were not reasonable in itself, it were due to your beauty and station, lady, to grant it. I leave the bale in your care, and before to-morrow’s sun has set, one will await the answer. Captain Ludlow, are we to part in friendship, or does your duty to the Queen proscribe the word?”

“If what you seem,” said Ludlow, “you are a being inexplicable! If this be some masquerade, as I half suspect, ’tis well maintained, at least, though not worthily assumed.”

“You are not the first who has refused credit to his senses, in a matter wherein the Water Witch and her commander have been

concerned.—Peace, honest Tom—thy whistle will not hasten Father Time! Friend or not, Captain Ludlow need not be told he is my prisoner.”

“That I have fallen into the power of a miscreant—”

“Hist! if thou hast love of bodily ease and whole bones. Master Thomas Tiller is a man of rude humour, and he as little likes contumely as another. Besides, the honest mariner did but obey my orders, and his character is protected by a superior responsibility.”

“Thy orders!” repeated Ludlow, with an expression of eye and lip that might have offended one more disposed to take offence than him he addressed. “The fellow who so well succeeded in his artifice, is one much more likely to command than to obey. If any here be the Skimmer of the Seas, it is he.”

“We are all no more than the driving spray, which goes whither the winds list. But in

what hath the man offended, that he finds so little favour with the Queen's captain? He has not had the boldness to propose a secret traffic with so loyal a gentleman?"

"'Tis well, Sir; you choose a happy occasion for this pleasantry. I landed to manifest the respect that I feel for this lady, and I care not if the world knows the object of the visit. 'Twas no silly artifice that led me hither."

"Spoken with the frankness of a seaman!" said the inexplicable dealer in contraband, though his colour lessened and his voice appeared to hesitate. "I admire this loyalty in man to woman, for as custom has so strongly fettered them in the expression of their inclinations, it is due from us to leave as little doubt as possible of our intentions. It is difficult to think that *la Belle Barbérie* can do wiser than to reward so much manly admiration!"

The stranger cast a glance, which Alida

fancied betrayed solicitude, as he spoke, at the maiden, and he appeared to expect she would reply.

“When the time shall come for a decision,” returned the half-pleased and yet half-offended subject of his allusion, “it may be necessary to call upon very different counsellors for advice. I hear the step of my uncle—Captain Ludlow, I leave it to your discretion to meet him or not.”

“The heavy footstep was approaching through the outer rooms of the pavilion. Ludlow hesitated, cast a reproachful look at his mistress, and then he instantly quitted the apartment, by the place through which he had entered. A noise in the shrubbery sufficiently proved that his return was expected, and that he was closely watched.

“Noah’s Ark and our grandmothers!” exclaimed Myndert, appearing at the door with a face red with his exertions. “You have brought us the cast-off finery of our ancestors,

Master Seadrift. Here are stuffs of an age that is past, and they should be bartered for gold that hath been spent."

"What now! what now!" responded the free-trader, whose tone and manner seemed to change at will, in order to suit the humour of whomsoever he was brought to speak with. "What now, pertinacious burgher, that thou shouldst cry down wares that are but too good for these distant regions. Many is the English duchess who pines to possess but the tithe of these beautiful stuffs I offer thy niece, and faith, rare is the English duchess that would become them half so well!"

"The girl is seemly, and thy velvets and brocades are passable, but the heavy articles are not fit to offer to a Mohawk Sachem. There must be a reduction of prices, or the invoice cannot pass."

"The greater the pity. But if sail we must, sail we will! The brigantine knows the channel over the Nantucket sands; and my life on it, the

Yankees will find others than the Mohawks for chapmen."

"Thou art as quick in thy motions, Master Seadrift, as the boat itself. Who said that a compromise might not be made, when discussion was prudently and fairly exhausted? Strike off the odd florins, leave the balance in round thousands, and thy trade is done for the season."

"Not a stiver. Here, count me back the faces of the Braganza; throw enough of thin ducats into the scales to make up the sum, and let thy slaves push inland with the articles, before the morning light comes to tell the story. Here has been one among us, who may do mischief if he will, though I know not how far he is master of the main secret."

Alderman Van Beverout stared a little wildly about him, adjusted his wig, like one fully conscious of the value of appearances in this world, and then cautiously drew the curtains before the windows.

“ I know of none more than common, my niece excepted,” he said, when all these precautions had been observed. “ ’Tis true the Patroon of Kinderhook is in the house, but as the man sleeps, he is a witness in our favour. We have the testimony of his presence, while his tongue is silent.”

“ Well, be it so,” rejoined the free-trader, reading, in the imploring eyes of Alida, a petition that he would say no more. “ I knew by instinct there was one unusual, and it was not for me to discover that he sleeps. There are dealers on the coast, who, for the sake of insurance, would charge his presence in their bills.”

“ Say no more, worthy Master Seadrift, and take the gold. To confess the truth, the goods are in the periagua and fairly out of the river. I knew we should come to conclusions in the matter, and time is precious, as there is a cruiser of the Queen so nigh. The rogues will pass the pennant like innocent market people,

and I'll risk a Flemish gelding against a Virginia nag, that they inquire if the captain has no need of vegetables for his soup! Ah, ha, ha, ha! That Ludlow is a simpleton, niece of mine, and he is not yet fit to deal with men of mature years. You'll think better of his qualities one day, and bid him begone like an unwelcome dun."

"I hope these proceedings may be legally sanctioned, uncle?"

"Sanctioned! Luck sanctions all. It is in trade as in war. Success gives character and booty in both. Your rich dealer is sure to be your honest dealer. Plantations and orders in council! what are our rulers doing at home, that they need be so vociferous about a little contraband? The rogues will declaim by the hour concerning bribery and corruption, while more than half of them get their seats as clandestinely—ay, and as illegally as you get these rare Mechlin laces! Should the Queen take offence at our dealings, Master Sea-

drift, bring me another season or two as profitable as the last, and I'll be your passenger to London, go on 'Change, buy a seat in parliament, and answer to the royal displeasure from my place, as they call it. By the responsibility of the States-General! but I should expect, in such a case, to return Sir Myndert, and then the Manhattanese might hear of a Lady Van Beverout, in which case, pretty Alida, thy assets would be sadly diminished!—so go to thy bed, child, and dream of fine laces and rich velvets, and duty to old uncles, and discretion, and all manner of agreeable things—kiss me, jade, and to thy pillow.”

Alida obeyed, and was preparing to quit the room, when the free-trader presented himself before her with an air at once so gallant and respectful, that she could scarce take offence at the freedom.

“ I should fail in gratitude,” he said, “ were I to part from so generous a customer, without

thanks for her liberality. The hope of meeting again will hasten my return."

"I know not that you are my debtor for these thanks," returned Alida, though she saw that the Alderman was carefully collecting the contents of the bale, and that he had already placed three or four of the most tempting of its articles on her dressing-table. "We cannot be said to have bargained!"

"I have parted with more than is visible to vulgar eyes," returned the stranger, dropping his voice, and speaking with an earnestness that caused his auditor to start. "Whether there will be a return for the gift, or perhaps I had better call it loss, time and my stars must shew!"

He then took her hand, and raised it to his lips, by an action so graceful and so gentle, as not to alarm the maiden until the freedom was done. La Belle Barbérie reddened to her forehead, seemed disposed to condemn the

liberty, frowned, smiled, and courtesying, in confusion withdrew.

Several minutes passed in profound silence after Alida had disappeared. The stranger was thoughtful, though his bright eye kindled, as if merry thoughts were uppermost, and he paced the room, entirely heedless of the existence of the Alderman. The latter, however, soon took occasion to remind his companion of his presence.

“No fear of the girl’s prating,” exclaimed the Alderman, when his task was ended. “She is an excellent and dutiful niece, and here, you see, is a balance on her side of the account that would shut the mouth of the wife of the first lord of the Treasury. I disliked the manner in which you would have the child introduced; for, look you, I do not think that either Monsieur Barbérie or my late sister, would altogether approve of her entering into traffic so very young; but what is done is done, and the Norman himself could not deny that I

have made a fair set-off of very excellent commodities for his daughter's benefit.—When dost mean to sail, Master Seadrift?"

“With the morning tide. I little like the neighbourhood of these meddling guarda costas.”

“Bravely answered. Prudence is a cardinal quality in a private trader, and it is a quality that I esteem in Master Skimmer next to his punctuality. Dates and obligations! I wish half of the firms of three and four names, without counting the Co.'s, were as much to be depended on.—Dost not think it safer to repass the inlet under favour of the darkness?"

“'Tis impossible. The flood is entering it like water rushing through a race-way, and we have the wind at east. But fear not, the brigantine carries no vulgar freight, and your commerce has given us a swept hold. The Queen and the Braganza, with Holland ducats, might show their faces even in the royal exchequer itself! We have no want of passes, and the

Miller's Maid is just as good a name to hail by as the Water Witch. We begin to tire of this constant running, and have half a mind to taste the pleasures of your Jersey sports for a week. There should be shooting on the upper plains?"

"Heaven forbid! Heaven forbid! Master Seadrift. I had all the deer taken for the skins, ten years ago; and as to birds, they deserted us to a pigeon when the last tribe of the savages went west of the Delaware. Thou hast discharged thy brigantine to better effect than thou couldst ever discharge thy fowling-pieces. I hope the hospitality of the Lust in Rust is no problem; but blushes and curiosity! I could wish to keep a fair countenance among my neighbours. Art sure the impertinent masts of the brigantine will not be seen above the trees when the day comes? This Captain Ludlow is no laggard when he thinks his duty actually concerned."

"We shall endeavour to keep him quiet"

The cover of the trees and the berth of the boat, make all snug as respects his people. I leave worthy Tiller to settle balances between us, and so I take my leave. Master Alderman—a word at parting. Does the Viscount Cornbury still tarry in the Provinces?”

“Like a fixture. There is not a mercantile house in the colony more firmly established.”

“There are unsettled affairs between us. A small premium would buy the obligations.”

“Heaven keep thee, Master Seadrift, and pleasant voyages back and forth. As for the Viscount’s responsibility, the Queen may trust him with another province, but Myndert Van Beverout would not give him credit for the tail of a marten; and so again, Heaven preserve thee!”

The dealer in contraband appeared to tear himself from the sight of all the little elegancies that adorned the apartment of la Belle Barbérie with reluctance. His adieus to the Alderman were rather cavalier, for he still maintained a

cold and abstracted air; but as the other scarcely observed the forms of decorum in his evident desire to get rid of his guest, the latter was finally obliged to depart. He disappeared by the low balcony where he had entered.

When Myndert Van Beverout was alone, he shut the windows of the pavilion of his niece and retired to his own part of the dwelling. Here the thrifty burgher first busied himself in making sundry calculations, with a zeal that proved how much his mind was engrossed by the occupation. After this preliminary step he gave a short but secret conference to the mariner of the India shawl, during which there was much clinking of gold pieces. But when the latter retired, the master of the villa first looked to the trifling securities which were then as now observed in the fastenings of an American country house, when he walked forth upon the lawn like one who felt the necessity of breathing the open air. He cast more than one inquiring glance at the windows of the room which was

occupied by Oloff Van Staats, where all was happily silent, at the equally immovable brigantine in the cove, and at the more distant and still motionless hull of the cruiser of the crown. All around him was in the quiet of midnight. Even the boats, which he knew to be plying between the land and the little vessel at anchor, were invisible; and he re-entered his habitation with the security one would be apt to feel under similar circumstances, in a region so little tenanted and so little watched as that in which he lived.

CHAPTER XII.

“Come on, Nerissa ; I have work in hand,
That you yet know not of.”

Merchant of Venice.

NOTWITHSTANDING the active movements which had taken place in and around the buildings of the Lust in Rust during the night which ended with our last chapter, none but the initiated were in the smallest degree aware of their existence. Oloff Van Staats was early a-foot, and when he appeared on the lawn to scent the morning air, there was nothing visible to give rise to a suspicion that aught extraordi-

nary had occurred during his slumbers. La Cour des Fées was still closed, but the person of the faithful François was seen near the abode of his young mistress, busied in some of those pretty little offices that can easily be imagined would be agreeable to a maiden of her years and station. Van Staats of Kinderhook had as little of romance in his composition as could well be in a youth of five and twenty, who was commonly thought to be enamoured, and who was not altogether ignorant of the conventional sympathies of the passion. The man was mortal, and as the personal attractions of la Belle Barbérie were sufficiently obvious, he had not entirely escaped the fate which seems nearly inseparable from young fancy when excited by beauty. He drew nigh to the pavilion, and by a guarded but decisive manœuvre, he managed to come so close to the valet as to render a verbal communication not only natural but nearly unavoidable.

“A fair morning and a healthful air, Mon-

sieur François," commenced the young Patroon, acknowledging the low salute of the domestic by gravely lifting his own beaver. "This is a comfortable abode for the warm months, and one it might be well to visit oftener."

"When Monsieur le Patteron shall be de lor' of ce manoir aussi, he shall come when he shall have la volonté," returned François, who knew that a pleasantry of his ought not to be construed into an engagement on the part of her he served, while it could not fail to be agreeable to him who heard it. "Monsieur de Van Staats est grand propriétaire sur la rivière, and one day, peut-être, he shall be propriétaire sur la mer!"

"I have thought of imitating the example of the Alderman, honest Francis, and of building a villa on the coast; but there will be time for that, when I shall find myself more established in life. Your young mistress is not yet moving, Francis?"

"Ma foi, non—Mam'selle Alide sleep!—'tis

good symptôme, Monsieur Patteron, pour les jeunes personnes to très-bien sleep. Monsieur, et toute la famille de Barbérie sleep à merveille ! Oui, c'est toujours une famille remarquable pour le sommeil !”

“ Yet one would wish to breathe this fresh and invigorating air, which comes from off the sea like a balm, in the early hours of the day.”

“ Sans doute, Monsieur. C'est un miracle how Mam'selle love de air ! Personne do not love air more as Mam'selle Alide. Bah ! It was grand plaisir to see how Monsieur de Barbérie love de air !”

“ Perhaps, Mr. Francis, your young lady is ignorant of the hour. It might be well to knock at the door, or perhaps at the window. I confess, I should much admire to see her bright face smiling from that window on this soft morning scene.”

It is not probable that the imagination of the Patroon of Kinderhook ever before took so high a flight, and there was reason to suspect, by

the wavering and alarmed glance that he cast around him, after so unequivocal an expression of weakness, that he already repented his temerity. François, who would not willingly disoblige a man that was known to possess a hundred thousand acres of land, with manorial rights, besides personals of no mean amount, felt embarrassed by the request, but was enabled to recollect in time that the heiress was known to possess a decision of character that might choose to control her own pleasures.

“ Well, I shall be too happy to knock ; mais Monsieur sait dat sleep est si agréable pour les jeunes personnes ! On n’a jamais knock, dans la famille de Monsieur de Barbérie, and je suis sûr, que Mam’selle Alide do not love to hear de knock—pourtant, si Monsieur le Patteron le veut, I shall consult ses—Voilà ! Monsieur Bevre, qui vient sans knock à la fenêtre. J’ai l’honneur de vous laisser avec Monsieur Al’erman.”

And so the complaisant, but still considerate

valet, bowed himself out of a dilemma, that he found, as he muttered to himself, while retiring, “tant soit peu ennuyant.”

The air and manner of the Alderman, as he approached his guest, were, like the character of the man, hale, hearty, and a little occupied with his own enjoyments and feelings. He hemmed thrice ere he was near enough to speak, and each of the strong expirations seemed to invite the admiration of the Patroon for the strength of his lungs, and for the purity of the atmosphere around a villa which acknowledged him for its owner.

“Zephyrs and spas! but this is the abode of health, Patroon!” cried the burgher, as soon as these demonstrations of his own bodily condition had been sufficiently repeated. “One sometimes feels in this air equal to holding a discourse across the Atlantic with his friends at Scheveling, or the Helder. A broad and deep chest, air like this from the sea, with a clear conscience, and a lucky hit in the way of

trade, cause the lungs of a man to play as easily and as imperceptibly as the wings of a humming bird.—Let me see; there are few fourscore men in thy stock. The last Patroon closed the books at sixty-six; and his father went but a little beyond seventy. I wonder there has never been an intermarriage among you with the Van Courtlandts; that blood is as good as an insurance to fourscore and ten of itself.”

“ I find the air of your villa, Mr. Van Bever-out, a cordial that one could wish to take often,” returned the other, who had far less of the brusque manner of the trader, than his companion. “ It is a pity that all who have the choice, do not profit by their opportunities to breathe it.”

“ You allude to the lazy mariners in yon vessel! Her Majesty’s servants are seldom in a hurry, and as for this brigantine in the cove, the fellow seems to have gotten in by magic! I warrant me now the rogue is there for no good, and that the Queen’s exchequer

will be none the richer for his visit. Harkee, you Brom," calling to an aged black, who was working at no great distance from the dwelling, and who was deep in his master's confidence, "hast seen any boats plying between yonder roguish-looking brigantine and the land?"

The negro shook his head like the earthen image of a mandarin, and laughed loud and heartily.

"I b'rieve he do all he mischief among a Yankee, an' he only come here to take he breat'," said the wily slave. "Well, I wish wid all a heart dere would come free trader some time along our shore. Dat gib a chance to poor black man to make an honest penny!"

"You see, Patroon, human nature itself rises against monopoly! That was the voice of instinct speaking with the tongue of Brom, and it is no easy task for a merchant to keep his dependants obedient to laws, which in themselves create so constant a temptation to break them. Well, well; we will always hope

for the best, and endeavour to act like dutiful subjects. The boat is not amiss, as to form and rig, let her come from where she will.—Dost think the wind will be off the land this morning ?”

“ There are signs of a change in the clouds. One could wish that all should be out in the air to taste this pleasant sea-breeze while it lasts.”

“ Come, come,” cried the Alderman, who had for a moment studied the state of the heavens with a solicitude that he feared might attract his companion’s attention, “ we will taste our breakfast. This is the spot to shew the use of teeth ! The negroes have not been idle during the night, Mr. Van Staats—he-e-em—I say, Sir, they have not been idle—and we shall have a choice among the dainties of the river and bay.—That cloud above the mouth of Rariton appears to rise, and we may yet have a breeze at west !”

“ Yonder comes a boat in the direction of the city,” observed the other, reluctantly obeying

a motion of the Alderman to retire to the apartment where they were accustomed to break their fasts. "To me it seems to approach with more than ordinary speed."

"There are stout arms at its oars! Can it be a messenger for the cruiser! no—it rather steers more for our own landing. These Jersey-men are often overtaken by the night, between York and their own doors. And now, Patroon, we will to our knives and forks like men who have taken the best stomachics."

"And are we to refresh ourselves alone?" demanded the young man, who ever and anon cast a sidelong and wistful glance at the closed and immovable shutters of la Cour des Fées.

"Thy mother hath spoilt thee, young Oloff; unless the coffee comes from a pretty female hand, it loses its savour. I take thy meaning, and think none the worse of thee, for the weakness is natural at thy years. Celibacy and independence! A man must get beyond forty, before he is ever sure of being his own master.

Come hither, Master Francis. It is time my niece had shaken off this laziness, and shown her bright face to the sun. We wait for her fair services at the table. I see nothing of that lazy hussy Dinah, any more than of her mistress."

"Assurément non, Monsieur," returned the valet. "Mam'selle Dinah do not love trop d'activité. Mais Monsieur Al'erman, elles sont jeunes, toutes les deux! Le sommeil est bien salulaire pour la jeunesse."

"The girl is no longer in her cradle, Francis, and it is time to rattle at the windows. As for the black minx who should have been up and at her duty this hour, there will be a balance to settle between us. Come, Patroon:—the appetite will not await the laziness of a wilful girl; we will to the table.—Dost think the wind will stand at west this morning?"

Thus saying, the Alderman led the way into the little parlour, where a neat and comfortable service invited them to break their morning fast.

He was followed by Oloff Van Staats with a lingering step, for the young man really longed to see the windows of the pavilion open, and the fair face of Alida smiling amid the other beautiful objects of the scene. François proceeded to take such measures to arouse his mistress as he believed to comport with his duty to her uncle and his own ideas of bienséance. After some little delay the Alderman and his guest took their seats at the table, the former loudly protesting against the necessity of waiting for the idle, and throwing in an occasional moral concerning the particular merit of punctuality in domestic economy as well as in the affairs of commerce.

“The ancients divided time,” said the somewhat pertinacious commentator, “into years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes and moments, as they divided numbers into units, tens, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands, and both with an object. If we commence at the bottom and employ well the moments, Mr.

Van Staats, we turn the minutes into tens, the hours into hundreds, and the weeks and months into thousands—ay, and when there is a happy state of trade, into tens of thousands! Missing an hour, therefore, is somewhat like dropping an important figure in a complex calculation, and the whole labour may be useless for want of punctuality in one as for want of accuracy in the other. Your father, the late Patroon, was what may be called a minute man. He was as certain to be seen in his pew at church at the stroke of the clock, as to pay a bill when its items had been properly examined. Ah! it was a blessing to hold one of his notes, though they were far scarcer than broad pieces of bullion. I have heard it said, Patroon, that the manor is backed by plenty of Johannes and Dutch ducats.”

“The descendant has no reason to reproach his ancestors with want of foresight.”

“Prudently answered—not a word too much nor too little: a principle on which all honest

men settle their accounts. By proper management such a foundation might be made to uphold an estate that should count thousands with the best of Holland or England. Growth and majority ! Patroon ; but we of the colonies must come to man's estate in time, like our cousins on the dykes of the low countries, or our rulers among the smitheys of England. Erasmus, look at that cloud over the Rariton, and tell me if it rises."

The negro reported that the vapour was stationary, and at the same time, by way of episode, he told his master that the boat which had been seen approaching the land had reached the wharf, and that some of its crew were ascending the hill towards the Lust in Rust.

"Let them come of all hospitality," returned the Alderman, heartily ; "I warrant me they are honest farmers from the interior a-hungered with the toil of the night. Go tell the cook to feed them with the best, and bid them welcome. And harkee, boy ; if there be among them any

comfortable yeoman, bid the man enter and sit at our table. This is not a country, Patroon, to be nice about the quality of the cloth a man has on his back, or whether he wears a wig or only his own hair. What is the fellow gaping at?"

Erasmus rubbed his eyes, and then showing his teeth to the full extent of a double row, that glittered like pearls, he gave his master to understand that the negro introduced to the reader under the name of Euclid, and who was certainly his own brother of the half blood, or by the mother's side, was entering the villa. The intelligence caused a sudden cessation of the masticating process in the Alderman, who had not however time to express his wonder ere two doors simultaneously opened, and François presented himself at the one, while the shining and doubting face of the slave from town darkened the other. The eyes of Myndert rolled first to this side, and then to that, a certain misgiving of the heart preventing him from speaking to

either, for he saw in the disturbed features of each, omens that bade him prepare himself for unwelcome tidings. The reader will perceive by the description we shall give, that there was abundant reason for the sagacious burgher's alarm.

The visage of the valet, at all times meagre and long, seemed extended to far more than its usual dimensions, the under jaw appearing fallen and trebly attenuated. The light blue protruding eyes were open to the utmost, and they expressed a certain confused wildness that was none the less striking for the painful expression of mental suffering with which it was mingled. Both hands were raised with the palms outward, while the shoulders of the poor fellow were elevated so high as entirely to destroy the little symmetry that Nature had bestowed on that particular part of his frame.

On the other hand the look of the negro was guilty, dogged and cunning. His eye leered askance, seeming to wish to play around the person of his master, as it will be seen his lan-

guage endeavoured to play around his understanding. The hands crushed the crown of a woollen hat between their fingers, and one of his feet described semicircles with its toe, by performing nervous evolutions on its heel.

“Well!” ejaculated Myndert, regarding each in turn; “what news from the Canadas?—Is the Queen dead, or has she restored the colony to the United Provinces?”

“Mam’selle Alide!” exclaimed, or rather groaned François.

“The poor dumb beast!” muttered Euclid.

The knives and the forks fell from the hands of Myndert and his guest as it were by a simultaneous paralysis. The latter involuntarily arose, while the former planted his solid person still more firmly in its seat, like one who was preparing to meet some severe and expected shock with all the physical resolution he could muster.

“What of my niece?—What of my geldings?—You have called upon Dinah?”

“ Sans doute, Monsieur.”

“ And you kept the keys of the stable ?”

“ I nebber let him go at all.”

“ And you bade her call her mistress ?”

“ She no make answair, du tout.”

“ The animals were fed and watered as I ordered ?”

“ Em nebber take he food better.”

“ You entered the chamber of my niece yourself to awake her ?”

“ Monsieur a raison.”

“ What the devil has befallen the innocent ?”

“ He lose he stomach quite, and I t'ink it great time 'fore it ebber come back.”

“ Mister Francis, I desire to know the answer of Monsieur Barbérie's daughter ?”

“ Mam'selle no répond, Monsieur ; pas un syllabe !”

“ Drenchers and fleams ! The beauty should have been drenched and blooded.”

“ He'm too late for dat, Masser, on honour.”

“ The obstinate hussy ! This comes of her

Huguenot breed, a race that would quit house and lands rather than change its place of worship."

"La famille de Barbérie est honorable, Monsieur, mais le grand monarque fut un peu trop exigeant. Vraiment, la dragonade était mal avisée, pour faire des chrétiens !"

"Apoplexies and hurry ! you should have sent for the farrier to administer to the sufferer, thou black hound !"

"E'm go for a butcher, Masser, to save he skin, for he war' too soon dead."

The word dead produced a sudden pause. The preceding dialogue had been so rapid, and question and answer, no less than the ideas of the principal speaker, had got so confused, that, for a moment, he was actually at a loss to understand whether the last great debt of nature had been paid by la Belle Barbérie, or one of the Flemish geldings. Until now, consternation as well as the confusion of the interview, had

constrained the Patroon to be silent, but he profited by the breathing time to interpose.

“It is evident, Mr. Van Beverout,” he said, speaking with a tremor in the voice which betrayed his own uneasiness, “that some untoward event has occurred. Perhaps the negro and I had better retire, that you may question Francis concerning that which hath befallen Mademoiselle Barbérie more at your leisure.”

The Alderman was recalled from a profound stupor by this gentlemanlike and considerate proposal. He bowed his acknowledgments, and permitted Mr. Van Staats to quit the room; but when Euclid would have followed, he signed to the negro to remain.

“I may have occasion to question thee farther,” he said, in a voice that had lost most of that compass and depth for which it was so remarkable. “Stand there, sirrah, and be in readiness to answer. And now, Mister Francis, I desire to know why my niece declines taking her breakfast with myself and my guest?”

“*Mon Dieu, Monsieur, it is not possible y répondre. Les sentiments des demoiselles are ne vair décidés !*”

“Go then, and say to her, that my sentiments are decided to curtail certain bequests and devises, which have consulted her interests more than strict justice to others of my blood, ay, and even of my name, might dictate.”

“*Monsieur y réfléchira. Mam’selle Alide be so young personne !*”

“Old or young, my mind is made up ; and so to your *Cour des Fées*, and tell the lazy minx as much.—Thou hast ridden that innocent, thou scowling imp of darkness !”

“*Mais, pensez-y, je vous en prie, Monsieur. Mam’selle shall ne vair se sauver encore ; jamais, je vous en répond.*”

“What is the fellow jabbering about !” exclaimed the Alderman, whose mouth fell nearly to the degree that rendered the countenance of the valet so singularly expressive of distress.

“Where is my niece, Sir? and what means this allusion to her absence?”

“La fille de Monsieur de Barbérie n’y est pas!” cried François, whose heart was too full to utter more. The aged and affectionate domestic laid his hand on his breast, with an air of acute suffering, and then remembering the presence of his superior, he turned, bowed with a manner of profound condolence, struggled manfully with his own emotion, and succeeded in getting out of the room with dignity and steadiness.

It is due to the character of Alderman Van Beverout to say, that the blow occasioned by the sudden death of the Flemish gelding, lost some of its force, in consequence of so unlooked for a report concerning the inexplicable absence of his niece. Euclid was questioned, menaced and even anathematized, more than once, during the next ten minutes, but the cunning slave succeeded in confounding himself so effectually with the rest of his connections of the

half blood, during the search which instantly followed the report of François, that his crime was partially forgotten.

On entering la Cour des Fées it was, in truth, found to want her, whose beauty and grace had lent its chief attraction. The outer rooms, which were small, and ordinarily occupied during the day by François and the negress called Dinah, and in the night by the latter only, were in the state in which they might be expected to be seen. The apartment of the attendant furnished evidence that its occupant had quitted it in haste, though there was every appearance of her having retired to rest at the usual hour. Clothes were scattered carelessly about, and though most of her personal effects had disappeared, enough remained to prove that her departure had been hurried and unforeseen.

On the other hand, the little saloon, with the dressing-room and bed-room of la Belle Barbérie were in a state of the most studied arrangement.

Not an article of furniture was displaced, a door ajar, or a window open. The pavilion had evidently been quitted by its ordinary passage, and the door had been closed, in the customary manner, without using the fastenings. The bed had evidently not been entered, for the linen was smooth and untouched. In short, so complete was the order of the place, that yielding to a powerful natural feeling, the Alderman called aloud on his truant niece, by name, as if he expected to see her appear from some place in which she had secreted her person in idle sport. But this touching expedient was vain. The voice sounded hollow through the deserted rooms, and though all waited long to listen, there came no playful or laughing answer back.

“ Alida !” cried the burgher, for the fourth and last time, “ come forth, child ; I forgive thee thy idle sport, and all I have said of disinheritance was but a jest. Come forth, my sister’s daughter, and kiss thy old uncle !”

The Patroon turned aside, as he heard a man so known for his worldliness yielding to the power of nature, and the lord of a hundred thousand acres forgot his own disappointment, in the force of sympathy.

“Let us retire,” he said, gently urging the burgher to quit the place. “A little reflection will enable us to decide what should be done.”

The Alderman complied. Before quitting the place, however, its closets and drawers were examined, and the search left no further doubts of the step which the young heiress had taken. Her clothes, books, utensils for drawing, and even the lighter instruments of music, had disappeared.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Ay, that way goes the game,
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures.”

Midsummer Night's Dream.

THE tide of existence floats downward, and with it go, in their greatest strength, all those affections that unite families and kindred. We learn to know our parents in the fulness of their reason, and commonly in the perfection of their bodily strength. Reverence and respect, both mingle with our love; but the affection with which we watch the helplessness of infancy, the interest with which we see the ingenuous and

young profiting by our care, the pride of improvement, and the magic of hope, create an intensity of sympathy in their favour, that almost equals the identity of self-love. There is a mysterious and double existence in the tie that binds the parent to the child. With a volition and passions of its own, the latter has power to plant a sting in the bosom of the former, that shall wound as acutely as the errors which arise from mistakes, almost from crimes, of its own. But, when the misconduct of the descendant can be traced to neglect, or to a vicious instruction, then, indeed, even the pang of a wounded conscience may be added to the sufferings of those who have gone before. Such, in some measure, was the nature of the pain that Alderman Van Beverout was condemned to feel, when at leisure to reflect on the ill-judged measure that had been taken by la Belle Barbérie.

“ She was a pleasant and coaxing minx, Pat-roon,” said the burgher, pacing the room they

occupied with a quick and heavy step, and speaking unconsciously of his niece, as of one already beyond the interests of life, “and as wilful and headstrong as an unbroken colt.—Thou hard-riding imp! I shall never find a match for the poor disconsolate survivor.—But the girl had a thousand agreeable and delightful ways with her, that made her the delight of my old days. She has not done wisely to desert the friend and guardian of her youth, ay, even of her childhood, in order to seek protection from strangers. This is an unhappy world, Mr. Van Staats! All our calculations come to nought, and it is in the power of Fortune to reverse the most reasonable and wisest of our expectations. A gale of wind drives the richly freighted ship to the bottom, a sudden fall in the markets robs us of our gold, as the November wind strips the oak of its leaves; and bankruptcies and decayed credit often afflict the days of the oldest houses, as disease saps the strength of the body.—Alida! Alida! thou has wounded

one that never harmed thee, and rendered my age miserable !”

“ It is vain to contend with the inclinations,” returned the proprietor of the manor, sighing in a manner that did no discredit to the sincerity of his remark. “ I could have been happy to have placed your niece in the situation that my respected mother filled with so much dignity and credit, but it is now too late—”

“ We don’t know that ;—we don’t know that,” interrupted the Alderman, who still clung to the hope of effecting the first great wish of his heart, with the pertinacity with which he would have clung to the terms of any other fortunate bargain ; “ we should never despair, Mr. Van Staats, as long as the transaction is left open.”

“ The manner in which Mademoiselle Barbé-rie has expressed her preference, is so very decided, that I see no hope of completing the arrangement.”

“ Mere coquetry, Sir, mere coquetry ! The

girl has disappeared, in order to enhance the value of her future submission. One should never regard a treaty at an end, so long as reasonable hopes remain that it may be productive to the parties.”

“ I fear, Sir, there is more of the coquette in this step of the young lady, than a gentleman can overlook,” returned the Patroon, a little drily, and with far more point than he was accustomed to use. “ If the commander of her Majesty’s cruiser be not a happy man, he will not have occasion to reproach his mistress with disdain !”

“ I am not certain, Mr. Van Staats, that in the actual situation of our stipulations I ought to overlook an inuendo that seems to reflect on the discretion of my ward. Captain Ludlow— Well, sirrah, what is the meaning of this impertinence ?”

“ He’m waiting to see Masser,” returned the gaping Erasmus, who stood with the door in his hand, admiring the secret intelligence of his

master, who had so readily anticipated his errand.

“Who is waiting!—What does the simpleton mean?”

“I mean, a gentle’um Masser say.”

“The fortunate man is here to remind us of his success,” haughtily observed Van Staats of Kinderhook. “There can be no necessity of my presence at an interview between Alderman Van Beverout and his nephew.”

The justly mortified Patroon bowed ceremoniously to the equally disappointed burgher, and left the room the moment he had done speaking. The negro took his retreat as a favourable symptom for one who was generally known to be his rival, and he hastened to inform the young captain that the coast was clear.

The meeting that instantly succeeded was sufficiently constrained and awkward. Alderman Van Beverout assumed a manner of offended authority and wounded affection, while the officer of the Queen wore an air of compelled

submission to a duty that he found to be disagreeable. The introduction of the discourse was consequently ceremonious, and punctiliously observant of courtesy.

“ It has become my office,” continued Ludlow, after the preliminaries had been observed, “ to express the surprise I feel, that a vessel of the exceedingly equivocal appearance of the brigantine that is anchored in the cove, should be found in a situation to create unpleasant suspicions concerning the commercial propriety of a merchant, so well known as Mr. Alderman Van Beverout.”

“ The credit of Myndert Van Beverout is too well established, Captain Cornelius Ludlow, to be affected by the accidental position of ships and bays. I see two vessels anchored near the Lust in Rust, and if called upon to give my testimony before the Queen in council, I should declare that the one which wears her royal pendant had done more wrong to her subjects

than the stranger. But what harm is known of the latter?"

"I shall not conceal any of the facts, for I feel that this is a case in which a gentleman of your station has the fullest right to the benefit of explanations—"

"Hem—" interrupted the burgher, who disliked the manner in which his companion had opened the interview, and who thought he saw the commencement of a forced compromise in the turn it was taking—"Hem—I commend your moderation, Captain Ludlow. Sir, we are flattered in having a native of the province in so honourable a command on the coast. Be seated, I pray you, young gentleman, that we may converse more at leisure. The Ludlows are an ancient and well established family in the colonies, and though they were no friends of King Charles, why we have others here in the same predicament. There are few crowns in Europe that might not trace some of their discontented subjects to these colonies, and the greater the

reason, say I, why we should not be too hasty in giving faith to the wisdom of this European legislation. I do not pretend, Sir, to admire all the commercial regulations which flow from the wisdom of her Majesty's counsellors. Candour forbids that I should deny this truth—but what of the brigantine in the cove?"

“It is not necessary to tell one so familiar with the affairs of commerce, of the character of a vessel called the Water Witch, nor of that of its lawless commander, the notorious Skimmer of the Seas.”

“Captain Ludlow is not about to accuse Alderman Van Beverout of a connection with such a man!” exclaimed the burgher, rising as it were involuntarily, and actually recoiling a foot or two, apparently under the force of indignation and surprise.

“Sir, I am not commissioned to accuse any of the Queen's subjects. My duty is to guard her interests on the water, to oppose her open enemies, and to uphold her royal prerogatives.”

“ An honourable employment, and one I doubt not that is honourably discharged. Resume your seat, Sir, for I foresee that the conference is likely to end as it should between a son of the late very respectable king’s counsellor and his father’s friend. You have reason then for thinking that this brigantine, which has so suddenly appeared in the cove, has some remote connection with the Skimmer of the Seas !”

“ I believe the vessel to be the famous Water Witch itself, and her commander to be, of course, that well-known adventurer.”

“ Well, Sir—well, Sir—this may be so. It is impossible for me to deny it; but what should such a reprobate be doing here, under the guns of a Queen’s cruiser ?”

“ Mr. Alderman, my admiration of your niece is not unknown to you.”

“ I have suspected it, Sir,” returned the burgher, who believed the tenor of the compromise was getting clearer, but who still waited to know the exact value of the concessions the

other party would make, before he closed a bargain in a hurry, of which he might repent at his leisure—"indeed, it has even been the subject of some discourse between us."

"This admiration induced me to visit your villa the past night—"

"This is a fact too well established, young gentleman."

"Whence I took away—" Ludlow hesitated, as if anxious to select his words—

"Alida Barbérie."

"Alida Barbérie!"

"Ay, Sir; my niece, or perhaps I should say my heiress, as well as the heiress of old Etienne de Barbérie. The cruise was short, Captain Cornelius Ludlow, but the prize-money will be ample—unless indeed a claim to neutral privileges should be established in favour of part of the cargo!"

"Sir, your pleasantry is amusing, but I have little leisure for its enjoyment. That I visited the Cour des Fées shall not be denied. I think

la Belle Barbérie will not be offended, under the circumstances, with this acknowledgment."

"If she is, the jade has a rare squeamishness, after what has passed!"

"I pretend not to judge of more than my duty. The desire to serve my royal mistress had induced me, Mr. Van Beverout, to cause a seaman of odd attire and audacious deportment to enter the Coquette. You will know the man, when I tell you he was your companion in the island ferry-boat."

"Yes, yes, I confess there was a mariner of the long voyage there, who caused much surprise and some uneasiness to myself and niece, as well as to Van Staats of Kinderhook."

Ludlow smiled, like one not to be deceived, as he continued,—

"Well, Sir, this man so far succeeded as to tempt me to suffer him to land, under the obligation of some half-extorted promise—we came into the river together, and entered your grounds in company."

Alderman Van Beverout now began to listen like a man who dreaded, while he desired to catch each syllable. Observing that Ludlow paused, and watched his countenance with a cool and steady eye, he recovered his self-command, and affected a mere ordinary curiosity, while he signed to him to proceed.

“ I am not sure I tell Alderman Van Beverout any thing that is new,” resumed the young officer, “ when I add, that the fellow suffered me to visit the pavilion, and then contrived to lead me into an ambush of lawless men, having previously succeeded in making captives of my boat’s crew.”

“ Seizures and warrants !” exclaimed the burgher, in his natural strong and hasty manner of speaking. “ This is the first I have heard of the affair. It was ill-judged, to call it by no other term.”

Ludlow seemed relieved, when he saw, by the undisguised amazement of his companion,

that the latter was in truth ignorant of the manner in which he had been detained.

“ It might not have been, Sir, had our watch been as vigilant as their artifice was deep,” he continued. “ But I was little guarded, and having no means to reach my ship, I—”

“ Ay, ay, Captain Ludlow ; it is not necessary to be so circumstantial ; you proceeded to the wharf, and—”

“ Perhaps, Sir, I obeyed my feelings, rather than my duty,” observed Ludlow, colouring high, when he perceived that the burgher paused to clear his throat. “ I returned to the pavilion, where—”

“ You persuaded a niece to forget her duty to her uncle and protector ?”

“ This is a harsh and most unjustifiable charge, both as respects the young lady and myself. I can distinguish between a very natural desire to possess articles of commerce that are denied by the laws, and a more deliberate and mercenary plot against the revenue of the country. I believe

there are few of her years and sex, who would refuse to purchase the articles I saw presented to the eyes of la Belle Barbérie, especially when the utmost hazard could be no more than their loss, as they were already introduced into the country."

"A just discrimination, and one likely to render the arrangement of our little affairs less difficult! I was sure that my old friend the counsellor would not have left a son of his ignorant of principles, more especially as he was about to embark in a profession of so much responsibility.—And so my niece had the imprudence to entertain a dealer in contraband?"

"Alderman Van Beverout, there were boats in motion on the water, between this landing and the brigantine in the cove. A periagua even left the river for the city, at the extraordinary hour of midnight!"

"Sir, boats will move on the water when the hands of man set them in motion; but what have I to answer for in the matter? If goods

have entered the provinces without license, why they must be found and condemned; and if free traders are on the coast, they should be caught. Would it not be well to proceed to town and lay the fact of this strange brigantine's presence before the Governor without delay?"

"I have other intentions. If, as you say, goods have gone up the bay, it is too late for me to stop them, but it is not too late to attempt to seize yon brigantine. Now I would perform this duty in a manner as little likely to offend any of reputable name, as my allegiance will admit."

"Sir, I extol this discretion—not that there is any testimony to implicate more than the crew, but credit is a delicate flower, and it should be handled tenderly. I see an opening for an arrangement—but we will, as in duty bound, hear your propositions first, since you may be said to speak with the authority of the Queen. I will merely surmise that terms should be moderate between friends;—perhaps

I should say, between connections, Captain Ludlow.”

“ I am flattered by the word, Sir,” returned the young sailor, smiling with an expression of delight. “ First suffer me to be admitted to the charming *Cour des Fées* but for a moment.”

“ That is a favour which can hardly be refused you, who may be said to have a right now to enter the pavilion at pleasure,” returned the Alderman, unhesitatingly leading the way through the long passage to the deserted apartments of his niece, and continuing the blind allusions to the affairs of the preceding night, in the same indirect manner as had distinguished the dialogue during the whole interview. “ I shall not be unreasonable, young gentleman, and here is the pavilion of my niece ; I wish I could add, and here also is its mistress !”

“ And is *la Belle Barbérie* no longer a tenant of *la Cour des Fées* ?” demanded Ludlow, in a surprise too natural to be feigned.

Alderman Van Beverout regarded the young

man in wonder ; pondered a moment to consider how far denying a knowledge of the absence of his niece might benefit the officer in the pending negociation, and then he drily observed, “ Boats passed on the water during the night. If the men of Captain Ludlow were at first imprisoned, I presume they were set at liberty at the proper time ?”

“ They are carried I know not whither—the boat itself is gone, and I am here alone.”

“ Am I to understand, Captain Ludlow, that Alida Barbérie has not fled my house during the past night to seek a refuge in your ship ?”

“ Fled !” echoed the young man, in a voice of horror. “ Has Alida de Barbérie fled from the house of her uncle, at all ?”

“ Captain Ludlow, this is not acting. On the honour of a gentleman, are you ignorant of my niece’s absence ?”

The young commander did not answer, but striking his head fiercely, he smothered words that were unintelligible to his companion. When

this momentary burst of feeling was past, he sunk into a chair, and gazed about him in stupid amazement. All this pantomime was inexplicable to the Alderman, who, however, began to see that more of the conditions of the arrangement in hand, were beyond the control of his companion than he had at first believed. Still the plot thickened rather than grew clear, and he was afraid to speak, lest he might utter more than was prudent. The silence, therefore, continued for quite a minute, during which time the parties sat gazing at each other in dull wonder.

“ I shall not deny, Captain Ludlow, that I believed you had prevailed on my niece to fly aboard the *Coquette* ; for, though a man who has always kept his feelings in his own command, as the safest manner of managing particular interests, yet I am not to learn that rash youth is often guilty of folly. I am now equally at a loss with yourself to know what has become of her, since here she is not.”

“ Hold !” eagerly interrupted Ludlow. “ A boat left your wharf, for the city, in the earlier hours of the morning : is it not possible that she may have taken a passage in it ?”

“ It is not possible. I have reasons to know— in short, Sir, she is not there.”

“ Then is the unfortunate, the lovely, the indiscreet girl, for ever lost to herself and us !” exclaimed the young sailor, actually groaning under his mental agony. “ Rash, mercenary man ! to what an act of madness has this thirst of gold driven one so fair—would I could say, so pure and so innocent !”

But while the distress of the lover was thus violent, and caused him to be so little measured in his terms of reproach, the uncle of the fair offender appeared to be lost in surprise. Though la Belle Barbérie had so well preserved the decorum and reserve of her sex, as to leave even her suitors in doubt of the way her inclinations tended, the watchful Alderman had long

suspected that the more ardent, open, and manly commander of the *Coquette* was likely to triumph over one so cold in exterior and so cautious in his advances, as the Patroon of *Kinderhook*. When, therefore, it became apparent Alida had disappeared, he quite naturally inferred that she had taken the simplest manner of defeating all his plans for favouring the suit of the latter, by throwing herself at once into the arms of the young sailor. The laws of the colonies offered few obstacles to the legality of their union, and when Ludlow appeared that morning, he firmly believed that he beheld one, who, if he were not so already, was inevitably soon to become his nephew. But the suffering of the disappointed youth could not be counterfeited; and prevented from adhering to his first opinion, the perplexed Alderman seemed utterly at a loss to conjecture what could have become of his niece. Wonder rather than pain possessed him, and when he suffered his ample chin to repose on the finger and thumb of one hand, it was with the

air of a man that revolved in his mind all the plausible points of some knotty question.

“Holes and corners!” he muttered, after a long silence, “the wilful minx cannot be playing at hide and seek with her friends! The hussy had ever too much of *la famille de Barbérie*, and her high Norman blood about her, as that silly old valet has it, to stoop to such childish trifling. Gone she certainly is,” he continued, looking again into the empty drawers and closets, “and with her the valuables have disappeared. The guitar is missing—the lute I sent across the ocean to purchase, an excellently toned Dutch lute, that cost every stiver of one hundred guilders, is also wanting, and all the—hem—the recent accessions have disappeared. And there too, are my sister’s jewels, that I persuaded her to bring along, to guard against accidents while our backs are turned, they are not to be seen. François! François! thou long tried servitor of Etienne Barbérie, what the devil has become of thy mistress?”

“ Mais, Monsieur,” returned the disconsolate valet, whose decent features exhibited all the signs of unequivocal suffering, “ she no tell le pauvre François ! En supposant, que Monsieur ask le capitaine, he shall probablement know.”

The burgher cast a quick suspicious glance at Ludlow, and shook his head, to express his belief that the young man was true.

“ Go ; desire Mr. Van Staats of Kinderhook to favour us with his company.”

“ Hold,” cried Ludlow, motioning to the valet to withdraw. “ Mr. Beverout, an uncle should be tender of the errors of one so dear as this cruel, unreflecting girl. You cannot think of abandoning her to so frightful a fortune !”

“ I am not addicted to abandoning any thing, Sir, to which my title is just and legal. But you speak in enigmas. If you are acquainted with the place where my niece is secreted, avow it frankly, and permit me to take those measures which the case requires.”

Ludlow reddened to his forehead, and he

struggled powerfully with his pride and his regrets.

“ It is useless to attempt concealing the step which Alida Barbérie has been pleased to take,” he said, a smile so bitter passing over his features, as to lend them the expression of severe mockery ; “ she has chosen more worthily than either of us could have believed ; she has found a companion more suited to her station, her character, and her sex, than Van Staats of Kinderhook, or a poor commander of a Queen’s ship !”

“ Cruisers and manors ! what in the name of mysteries is thy meaning ? The girl is not here ; you declare she is not on board of the Coquette, and there remains only—”

“ The brigantine !” groaned the young sailor, uttering the word by a violent effort of the will.

“ The brigantine !” repeated the Alderman, slowly. “ My niece can have nothing to do aboard a dealer in contraband. That is to say, Alida Barbérie is not a trader.”

“Alderman Van Beverout, if we wish to escape the contamination of vice, its society must be avoided. There was one in the pavilion of a mien and assurance the past night that might delude an angel. Ah! woman! woman! thy mind is composed of vanities, and thy imagination is thy bitterest foe!”

“Women and vanities!” echoed the amazed burgher. “My niece, the heiress of old Etienne Marie de Barbérie, and the sought of so many of honourable names and respectable professions, to be a refugee with a rover!—always supposing your opinions of the character of the brigantine to be just. This is a conjecture too improbable to be true.”

“The eye of a lover, Sir, may be keener than that of a guardian,—call it jealousy if you will—would to Heaven my suspicions were untrue!—but if she be not there, where is she?”

The opinion of the Alderman seemed staggered. If la Belle Barbérie had not yielded to

the fascinations of that wayward, but seductive eye and smile, to that singular beauty of face, and to the secret and often irresistible charm that encircles eminent personal attractions, when aided by mystery, to what had she yielded, and whither had she fled?

These were reflections that now began to pass through the thoughts of the Alderman, as they had already planted stings in the bosom of Ludlow. With reflection, conviction began slowly to assert its power. But the truth did not gleam upon the mind of the calculating and wary merchant with the same instinctive readiness that it had flashed upon the jealous faculties of the lover. He pondered on each circumstance of the interview between the dealer in contraband and his niece, recalled the manner and discourse of the former, drew certain general and vague conjectures concerning the power which novelty, when coupled by circumstances of romance, might exercise over a female fancy, and dwelt long and secretly on some important

facts that were alone known to himself, before his judgment finally settled down into the same opinion as that which his companion had formed with all the sensitiveness of jealous alarm.

“Woman and vagaries !” muttered the burgher, after his study was ended. “Their conceits are as uncertain as the profits of a whaling voyage, or the luck of a sportsman. Captain Ludlow, your assistance will be needed in this affair, and as it may not be too late, since there are few priests in the brigantine—always supposing her character to be what you affirm—my niece may yet see her error, and be disposed to reward so much assiduity and attachment.”

“My services shall always be ready, so long as they can be useful to Alida Barbérie,” returned the young officer with haste, and yet a little coldly. “It will be time enough to speak of the reward when we shall have succeeded.”

“The less noise that is made about a little

domestic inconvenience like this the better ; and I would therefore suggest the propriety of keeping our suspicions of the character of the vessel a secret, until we shall be better informed."

The captain bowed his assent to the proposal.

"And now that we are of the same mind in the preliminaries, we will seek the Patroon of Kinderhook, who has a claim to participate in our confidence."

Myndert then led the way from the empty and melancholy Cour des Fées, with a step that had regained its busy and firm tread, and a countenance that expressed far more of vexation and weariness than of real sorrow.

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