

Sketches From My Life eBook

Sketches From My Life by Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden

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Sketches from my life.

CHAPTER I.

A rough start in life.

To attempt to write and publish sketches of my somewhat eventful career is an act that, I fear, entails the risk of making enemies of some with whom I have come in contact. But I have arrived at that time of life when, while respecting, as I do, public opinion, I have hardened somewhat into indifference of censure. I will, however, endeavour to write as far as lies in my power (while recording facts) 'in charity with all men.' This can be done in most part by omitting the names of ships in which and officers under whom I have served.

I was born, as the novelists say, of respectable parents, at Walton-on-the-Wold, in Leicestershire, on April 1, 1822. I will pass over my early youth, which was, as might be expected, from the time of my birth until I was ten years of age, without any event that could prove interesting to those who are kind enough to peruse these pages.

At the age of ten I was sent to a well-known school at Cheam, in Surrey, the master of which, Dr. Mayo, has turned out some very distinguished pupils, of whom I was not fated to be one; for, after a year or so of futile attempt on my part to learn something,



and give promise that I might aspire to the woolsack or the premiership, I was pronounced hopeless; and having declared myself anxious to emulate the deeds of Nelson, and other celebrated sailors, it was decided that I should enter the navy, and steps were taken to send me at once to sea.

A young cousin of mine who had been advanced to the rank of captain, more through the influence of his high connections than from any merit of his own, condescended to give me a nomination in a ship which he had just commissioned, and thus I was launched like a young bear, 'having all his sorrows to come,' into Her Majesty's navy as a naval cadet. I shall never forget the pride with which I donned my first uniform, little thinking what I should have to go through. My only consolation while recounting facts that will make many parents shudder at the thought of what their children (for they are little more when they join the service) were liable to suffer, is, that things are now totally altered, and that under the present regime every officer, whatever his rank, is treated like a gentleman, or he, or his friends, can know 'the reason why.'



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I am writing of a period some fifteen or twenty years after Marryat had astonished the world by his thrilling descriptions of a naval officer's life and its accompanying troubles. At the time of which I write people flattered themselves that the sufferings which 'Midshipman Easy' and 'The Naval Officer' underwent while serving the Crown were tales of the past. I will show by what I am about very briefly to relate that such was very far from being the case.

Everything being prepared, and good-bye being said to my friends, who seemed rather glad to be rid of me, I was allowed to travel from London on the box of a carriage which contained the great man who had given me the nomination (captains of men-of-war were very great men in those days), and after a long weary journey we arrived at the port where H.M.S.— was lying ready for sea. On the same night of our arrival the sailing orders came from the Admiralty; we were to go to sea the next day, our destination being South America.

Being a very insignificant individual, I was put into a waterman's boat with my chest and bed, and was sent on board. On reporting myself, I was told by the commanding officer not to bother him, but to go to my mess, where I should be taken care of. On descending a ladder to the lower deck, I looked about for the mess, or midshipmen's berth, as it was then called. In one corner of this deck was a dirty little hole about ten feet long and six feet wide, five feet high. It was lighted by two or three dips, otherwise tallow candles, of the commonest description—behold the mess!

In this were seated six or seven officers and gentlemen, some twenty-five to thirty years of age, called mates, meaning what are now called sub-lieutenants. They were drinking rum and water and eating mouldy biscuits; all were in their shirtsleeves, and really, considering the circumstances, seemed to be enjoying themselves exceedingly.

On my appearance it was evident that I was looked upon as an interloper, for whom, small as I was, room must be found. I was received with a chorus of exclamations, such as, 'What the deuce does the little fellow want here?' 'Surely there are enough of us crammed into this beastly little hole!' 'Oh, I suppose he is some protege of the captain's,' &c. &c.

At last one, more kindly disposed than the rest, addressed me: 'Sorry there is no more room in here, youngster;' and calling a dirty-looking fellow, also in his shirtsleeves, said, 'Steward, give this young gentleman some tea and bread and butter, and get him a hammock to sleep in.' So I had to be contented to sit on a chest outside the midshipmen's berth, eat my tea and bread and butter, and turn into a hammock for the first time in my life, which means 'turned out'—the usual procedure being to tumble out several times before getting accustomed to this, to me, novel bedstead. However, once accustomed to the thing, it is easy enough, and many indeed have been the comfortable nights I have slept in a hammock, such a sleep as many an occupant of a luxurious four-poster might envy. At early dawn a noise all around me disturbed my

slumbers: this was caused by all hands—officers and men—being called up to receive the captain, who was coming alongside to assume his command by reading his official appointment.



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I shall never forget his first words. He was a handsome young man, with fine features, darkened, however, by a deep scowl. As he stepped over the side he greeted us by saying to the first lieutenant in a loud voice, 'Put all my boat's crew in irons for neglect of duty.' It seems that one of them kept him waiting for a couple of minutes when he came down to embark. After giving this order our captain honoured the officers who received him with a haughty bow, read aloud his commission, and retired to his cabin, having ordered the anchor to be weighed in two hours.

Accordingly at eight o'clock we stood out to sea, the weather being fine and wind favourable. At eleven all hands were called to attend the punishment of the captain's boat's crew. I cannot describe the horror with which I witnessed six fine sailor-like looking fellows torn by the frightful cat, for having kept this officer waiting a few minutes on the pier. Nor will I dwell on this illegal sickening proceeding, as I do not write to create a sensation, and, thank goodness! such things cannot be done now.

I had not much time for reflection, for my turn came next. I believe I cried or got into somebody's way, or did something to vex the tyrant; all I know is that I heard myself addressed as 'You young scoundrel,' and ordered to go to the 'mast-head.' Go to the mast-head indeed! with a freshening wind, under whose influence the ship was beginning to heel over, and an increasing sea that made her jump about like an acrobat. I had not got my sea legs, and this feat seemed an utter impossibility to me. I looked with horror up aloft; then came over me the remembrance of Marryat's story of the lad who refused to go to the mast-head, and who was hoisted up by the signal halyards. While thinking of this, another 'Well, sir, why don't you obey orders?' started me into the lower rigging, which I began with the greatest difficulty to climb, expecting at every step to go headlong overboard.

A good-natured sailor, seeing the fix I was in, gave me a helping hand, and up I crawled as far as the maintop. This, I must explain to my non-nautical reader, is not the mast-head, but a comparatively comfortable half-way resting-place, from whence one can look about feeling somewhat secure.

On looking down to the deck my heart bled to see the poor sailor who had helped me undergoing punishment for his kind act. I heard myself at the same time ordered 'to go higher,' and a little higher I did go. Then I stopped, frightened to death, and almost senseless; terror, however, seemed to give me presence of mind to cling on, and there I remained till some hours afterwards; then I was called down. On reaching the deck I fainted, and knew no more till I awoke after some time in my hammock.

Now, I ask anyone, even a martinet at heart, whether such treatment of a boy, not thirteen years of age, putting his life into the greatest danger, taking this first step towards breaking his spirit, and in all probability making him, as most likely had been done to the poor men I had seen flogged that morning, into a hardened mutinous savage, was not disgraceful?



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Moreover, it was as close akin to murder as it could be, for I don't know how it was I didn't fall overboard, and then nothing could have saved my life. However, as I didn't fall, I was not drowned, and the effect on me was curious enough. For all I had seen and suffered on that the opening day of my sea-life made me think for the first time—and I have never ceased thinking (half a century has passed since then)—how to oppose tyranny in every shape. Indeed, I have always done so to such an extent as to have been frequently called by my superiors 'a troublesome character,' 'a sea lawyer,' &c.

Perhaps in this way I have been able to effect something, however small, towards the entire change that has taken place in the treatment of those holding subordinate positions in the navy—and that something has had its use, for the tyrant's hand is by force stayed now, 'for once and for all.'

With this little I am satisfied.

Now let us briefly look into the question, 'Why are men tyrants when they have it in *their power to be so*?'

Unfortunately, as a rule, it appears to come natural to them! What caused the Indian Mutiny? Let Indian officers and those employed in the Indian civil service answer that question.

However, I have only to do with naval officers. My experience tells me that a man clothed with brief but supreme authority, such as the command of a man-of-war, in those days when for months and months he was away from all control of his superiors and out of reach of public censure, is more frequently apt to listen to the promptings of the devil, which more or less attack every man, especially when he is alone.

Away from the softening influence of society and the wholesome fear of restraint, for a time at least the voice of his better angel is silenced. Perhaps also the necessarily solitary position of a commander of a man-of-war, his long, lonely hours, the utter change from the jovial life he led previous to being afloat, to say nothing of his liver getting occasionally out of order, may all tend to make him irritable and despotic.

I have seen a captain order his steward to be flogged, almost to death, because his pea-soup was not hot. I have seen an officer from twenty to twenty-five years of age made to stand between two guns with a sentry over him for hours, because he had neglected to see and salute the tyrant who had come on deck in the dark. And as a proof, though it seems scarcely credible, of what such men can do when unchecked by fear of consequences, I will cite the following:—

On one occasion the captain of whom I have been writing invited a friend to breakfast with him, and there being, I suppose, a slight monotony in the conversation, he asked



his guest whether he would like, by way of diversion, to see a man flogged. The amusement was accepted, and a man *was* flogged.

It was about the time I write of that the tyranny practised on board Her Majesty's ships was slowly but surely dawning upon the public, and a general outcry against injustice began.



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This was shown in a very significant manner by the following fact:—

A post-captain of high rank and powerful connections dared, in contradiction to naval law, to flog a midshipman. This young officer's father, happening to be a somewhat influential man, made a stir about the affair. The honourable captain was tried by court-martial and severely reprimanded.

However, I will cut short these perhaps uninteresting details, merely stating that for three years I suffered most shameful treatment. My last interview with my amiable cousin is worth relating. The ship was paid off, and the captain, on going to the hotel at Portsmouth, sent for me and offered me a seat on his carriage to London. Full of disgust and horror at the very sight of him, I replied that I would rather 'crawl home on my hands and knees than go in his carriage,' and so ended our acquaintance, for I never saw him again.

It may be asked how, like many others, I tided over all the ill-usage and the many trials endured during three years. The fact is, I had become during that period of ill-treatment so utterly hardened to it that I seemed to feel quite indifferent and didn't care a rap. But wasn't I glad to be free!

I had learnt many a lesson of use to me in after life, the most important of all being to sympathise with other people's miseries, and to make allowance for the faults and shortcomings of humanity.

On the other hand, experience is a severe taskmaster, and it taught me to be somewhat insubordinate in my notions. I fear I must confess that this spirit of insubordination has never left me.

On my arrival at home my relations failed to see in me an ill-used lad (I was only sixteen), and seemed inclined to disbelieve my yarns; but this did not alter the facts, nor can I ever forget what I went through during that 'reign of terror,' as it might well be called.

People may wonder how was it in the days of Benbow and his successors no complaints were made. To this I answer, first, that the men of those days, knowing the utter hopelessness of complaining, preferred to 'grin and bear;' secondly, that neither officers nor men were supposed to possess such a thing as feeling, when they had once put their foot on board a man-of-war. Then there were the almost interminable sea voyages under sail, during which unspeakable tyrannies could be practised, unheard of beyond the ship, and unpunished. It must be remembered that there were no telegraphs, no newspaper correspondents, no questioning public, so that the evil side of human nature (so often shown in the very young in their cruelty to animals) had its swing, fearless of retribution.



Let us leave this painful subject, with the consoling thought that we shall never see the like again.

CHAPTER II.

Perils by sea and land.

After enjoying a few weeks at home, I was appointed to the Naval Brigade on service in Spain, acting with the English army, who were there by way of assisting Queen Christina against Don Carlos.



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The army was a curious collection of regular troops and volunteer soldiers, the latter what would be called 'Bashi-Bazouks.' The naval part of the expedition consisted of 1,200 Royal Marines, and a brigade of sailors under the orders of Lord John Hay. The army (barring the regulars, who were few in numbers) was composed of about 15,000 of the greatest rabble I ever saw, commanded by Sir De Lacy Evans.

For fear any objection or misapprehension be applied to the word 'rabble,' I must at once state that these volunteers, though in appearance so motley and undisciplined, fought splendidly, and in that respect did all honour to their country and the cause they were fighting for.

Very soon after we had disembarked I received what is usually called my 'baptism of fire,' that is to say, I witnessed 'the first shot fired in anger.' The Carlists were pressing hard on the Queen's forces, who were returning towards the sea; it was of the greatest importance to hold certain heights that defended San Sebastian and the important port of Passagis.

The gallant marines (as usual to the front) were protecting the hill on which Lord John was standing; the fire was hot and furious. I candidly admit I was in mortal fear, and when a shell dropped right in the middle of us, and was, I thought, going to burst (as it did), I fell down on my face. Lord John, who was close to me, and looking as cool as a cucumber, gave me a severe kick, saying, 'Get up, you cowardly young rascal; are you not ashamed of yourself?'

I did get up and *was* ashamed of myself. From that moment to this I have never been hard upon those who flinched at the first fire they were under. My pride helped me out of the difficulty, and I flinched no more. For an hour or so the battle raged furiously.

By degrees all fear left me; I felt only excitement and anger, and when we (a lot I had to do with it!) drove the enemy back in the utmost confusion, wasn't I proud!

When all was over Lord John called me, and after apologising in the most courteous manner for the kick, he gave me his hand (poor fellow! he had already lost one arm while fighting for his country), and said: 'Don't be discouraged, youngster; you are by no means the first who has shown alarm on being for the first time under fire.' So I was happy.

It is not my intention to give in detail the events that I witnessed during that disastrous civil war in Spain; suffice it that after much hard fighting the Carlists were driven back into their mountains so much discouraged that they eventually renounced a hopeless cause; and at all events for a long period order was restored in Spain.

After serving under Lord John Hay for six or seven months, I was appointed to another ship, which was ordered to my old station, South America.



The captain of my new ship was in every sense a gentleman, and although a strict disciplinarian, was just and kind-hearted. From the captain downwards every officer was the same in thought and deed, so we were all as happy as sand-boys. It was then that I began to realise a fact of which before I had only a notion—namely, that discipline can be maintained without undue severity, to say nothing of cruelty, and that service in the navy could be made a pleasure as well as a duty to one's country.



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After visiting Rio de Janeiro, we were sent to the River Plate; there we remained nearly a year, during which time several adventures which I will relate occurred, both concerning my duties and my amusements.

I must tell my readers that from earliest boyhood I had a passionate love for shooting; and, through the kindness of my commanding officer while at Monte Video, I was allowed constantly to indulge in sport.

On one occasion my captain, who was a keen sportsman, took me with him out shooting. We had a famous day's sport, filled our game bags with partridges, ducks, and snipe, and were returning home on horseback when a solitary horseman, a nasty-looking fellow, armed to the teeth, rode up to us. As I knew a little Spanish we began to talk about shooting, &c. &c.; then he asked me to shoot a bird for him (the reason why he did this will be seen immediately). I didn't like the cut of his jib, so rather snubbed him. However, he continued to ride on with us, to within half a mile of where our boat was waiting to take us on board. I must explain our relative positions as we rode along. The captain was on my left, I next to him, and the man was on my right, riding very near to me. All of a sudden he exclaimed in Spanish, 'Now is the time or never,' threw his right leg over the pommel of his saddle, slipped on to the ground, drew his knife, dashed at me, and after snatching my gun from my hand, stuck his knife (as he thought) into me. Then he rushed towards the captain, pulling the trigger of my gun, and pointing straight at the latter's head; the gun was not loaded, having only the old percussion caps on. (Now I saw why he wanted me to fire, so that he might know whether my gun was loaded; but the old caps evidently deceived him.)

All this was the work of a very few seconds. Now what was my chief doing? Seeing a row going on, he was dismounting; in fact, was half-way off his horse, only one foot in the stirrup, when the man made the rush at him. Finding me stuck to my saddle (for the ruffian's knife had gone through my coat and pinned me), and the fellow snapping my gun, which was pointed at him, he as coolly as possible put his gun over his horse's shoulder and shot the would-be murderer dead on the spot. Then turning to me he said quite calmly, 'I call you to witness that that man intended to murder me.' How differently all would have ended had my gun been loaded! The villain would have shot my chief, taken both guns, and galloped off, leaving me ignominiously stuck to my saddle.

The audacity of this one man attacking us two armed sportsmen showed the immense confidence these prairie people feel in themselves, especially in their superior horsemanship. However, the fellow caught a Tartar on this occasion.

As for me, the knife had gone, as I said, through my loose shooting jacket just below the waist, through the upper part of my trousers, and so into the saddle, without even touching my skin. I have kept the knife in memory of my lucky escape.



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While laying at Monte Video there was on each side of us a French man-of-war, the officers of which were very amiably inclined, and many were the dinners and parties exchanged between us.

In those days the interchange of our respective languages was very limited on both sides, so much so, that our frantic efforts to understand each other were a constant source of amusement. A French midshipman and myself, however, considered ourselves equal to the occasion, and professed linguists; so on the principle that in the 'land of the blind the one-eyed man is king,' we were the swells of the festivities.

I remember on one occasion, when the birthday of Louis Philippe was to be celebrated, my French midshipman friend came on board officially and said, 'Sir, the first of the month is the feast of the King; you must fire the gun.' 'All right,' said we. Accordingly, we loaded our guns in the morning, preparatory to saluting at noon. It was raining heavily all the forenoon, so we had not removed what is called the tompions (to my unprofessional reader I may say that the tompion is a very large piece of wood made to fit into the muzzle, for the purpose of preventing wet from penetrating). To this tompion is, or used to be, attached a large piece of wadding, what for I never rightly understood.

Now it seems that those whose duty it was to attend to it had neglected to take these things out of the guns.

On the first gun being fired from the French ship we began our salute. The French ships were close alongside of us, one on either side. The gunner who fires stands with the hand-glass to mark the time between each discharge. On this occasion he began his orders thus: 'Fire, port;' then suddenly recollecting that the tompions were not removed he added, 'Tompions are in, sir.' No one moved. The gunner could not leave his work of marking time. Again he gave the order, 'Fire, starboard,' repeating, 'Tompions are in, sir,' and so on till half the broadside had been fired before the tompions had been taken out. It is difficult to describe the consternation on board the French vessels, whose decks were crowded with strangers (French merchants, &c.), invited from the shore to do honour to their King's fete. These horrid tompions and their adjuncts went flying on to their decks, from which every one scampered in confusion. It was lucky our guns did not burst.

This was a most awkward dilemma for all of us. I was sent on board to apologise. The French captain, with the courtesy of his nation, took the mishap most good-humouredly, begging me to return the tompions to my captain, as they had no occasion for them. So no bad feeling was created, though shortly after this contretemps an affair of so serious a nature took place, that a certain coldness crept in between ourselves and our ci-devant friends.

It seems that there had been of late several desertions from the French vessels lying at Monte Video, great inducements of very high wages being offered by the revolutionary

party in Buenos Ayres for men to serve them. The French commander therefore determined to search all vessels leaving Monte Video for other ports in the River Plate—a somewhat arbitrary proceeding, and one certain to lead to misunderstanding sooner or later.



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On the occasion I refer to, a vessel which, though not under the English flag, had in some way or other obtained English protection, was leaving the port; so we sent an officer and a party of armed men to prevent her being interfered with. I was of the party, which was commanded by our second lieutenant. Our doing this gave great offence to the French commander, who shortly after we had gone on board also sent a party of armed men, with positive orders to search the vessel at all risks. On our part we were ordered not to allow the vessel to be searched or interfered with. The French officer, a fine young fellow, came on board with his men and repeated his orders to Lieutenant C—. The vessel, I may mention, was a schooner of perhaps a couple of hundred tons, about 130 feet long. We had taken possession of the after-part of the deck, the French crew established themselves on the fore-part.

Never was there a more awkward position. The men on both sides loaded and cocked their muskets. The English and French officers stood close to one another. The former said, 'Sir, you have no business here, this vessel is under English protection. I give you five minutes to leave or take the consequences.' The other replied, 'Sir, I am ordered to search the vessel, and search her I will.' They both seemed to, and I am sure did, mean business; for myself, I got close to my lieutenant and cocked a pistol, intending to shoot the French officer at the least show of fighting. Nevertheless, I thought it a shockingly cruel and inhuman thing to begin a cold-blooded fight under such circumstances.

However, to obey orders is the duty of every man. Lieutenant C— looked at his watch; two minutes to spare. The marines were ordered to prepare, and I thought at the end of the two minutes the deck of the little vessel would have been steeped in blood. Just then, in the distance, there appeared a boat pulling towards us at full speed; it seems that wiser counsels had prevailed between the captains of the two ships: the French were told to withdraw and leave the vessel in our hands.

I was much amused at the cordial way in which the two lieutenants shook hands on receiving this order. There would indeed have been a fearful story to tell had it not arrived in time; for I never saw determination written so strongly on men's countenances as on those of both parties, so nearly engaged in what must have proved a most bloody fight.

After this incident cordial relations were never re-established between ourselves and our French friends; fortunately, shortly afterwards we sailed for Buenos Ayres.

Buenos Ayres, that paradise of pretty women, good cheer, and all that is nice to the sailor who is always ready for a lark! We at once went in for enjoying ourselves to our heart's content; we began, every one of us, by falling deeply in love before we had been there forty-eight hours—I say every one, because such is a fact.



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My respectable captain, who had been for many years living as a confirmed bachelor with his only relative, an old spinster sister, with whom he chummed, and I fancy had hardly been known to speak to another woman, was suddenly perceived walking about the street with a large bouquet in his hand, his hair well oiled, his coat (generally so loose and comfortable-looking) buttoned tight to show off his figure; and then he took to sporting beautiful kid gloves, and even to dancing. He could not be persuaded to go on board at any cost, while he had never left his ship before, except for an occasional day's shooting. In short, he had fallen hopelessly in love with a buxom Spanish lady with lustrous eyes as black as her hair, the widow of a murdered governor of the town.

Our first and second lieutenants followed suit; both were furiously in love; and, as I said, every one, even a married man, one of my messmates, fell down and worshipped the lovely (and lovely they were, and no mistake) Spanish girls of Buenos Ayres, whose type of beauty is that which only the blue blood of Spain can boast of. Now, reader, don't be shocked, I fell in love myself, and my love affair proved of a more serious nature, at least in its results, than that of the others, because, while the daughter (she was sixteen, and I seventeen) responded to my affection, her mother, a handsome woman of forty, chose to fall in love with me herself.

This was rather a disagreeable predicament, for I didn't, of course, return the mother's affection a bit, while I was certainly dreadfully spoony on the daughter.

To make a long story short, the girl and I, like two fools as we were, decided to run away together, and run away we did. I should have been married if the mother hadn't run after us. She didn't object to our being married, but, in the meantime, she remained with us, and she managed to make the country home we had escaped to, with the intention of settling down there, so unbearable, that, luckily for me as regards my future, I contrived to get away, and went as fast as I could on board my ship for refuge, never landing again during our stay at Buenos Ayres.

Fortunately, shortly afterwards we were ordered away, and so ended my first love affair.

I shall never forget the melancholy, woebegone faces of my captain and brother officers on our re-assembling on board. It was really most ludicrous. However, a sea voyage which included several sharp gales of wind soon erased all sad memories; things gradually 'brightened,' and ere many weeks had passed all on board H.M.S.— resumed their usual appearance.

CHAPTER III.

A tragical affair.



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Whilst I was at Buenos Ayres I had the good luck to visit the independent province of Paraguay, which my readers must have heard spoken of, sometimes with admiration, sometimes with sneers, as the hot-bed of Jesuitism. Those who sneer say that the Jesuit fathers who left Spain under Martin Garcia formed this colony in the River Plate entirely in accordance with the principles their egotism and love of power dictated. It may be so; it is possible that the Jesuits were wrong in the conclusions they came to as regards the governing or guiding of human nature; all I can say is, that the perfect order reigning throughout the colony they had formed, the respect for the clergy, the cheerful obedience to laws, the industry and peaceful happiness one saw at every step, made an impression on me I have never forgotten; and when I compare it with the discord, the crime, and the hatred of all authority which is now prevailing, alas! in most civilised countries, I look back to what I saw in Paraguay with a sigh of regret that such things are of the past. It was beautiful to see the respect paid to the Church (the acknowledged ruler of the place), the cleanliness and comfort of the farms and villages, the good-will and order that prevailed amongst the natives. It was most interesting to visit the schools, where only so much learning was introduced as was considered necessary for the minds of the industrious population, without rendering them troublesome to the colony or to themselves. Though the inhabitants were mostly of the fiery and ungovernable Spanish race, who had mixed with the wild aborigines, it is remarkable that they remained quiet and submissive.

To prevent pernicious influences reaching this 'happy valley,' the strictest regulations were maintained as regards strangers visiting the colony.

The River Plate, which, coming down from the Andes through hundreds of miles of rich country, flows through Paraguay, was unavailable to commerce owing to this law of exclusiveness, which prevented even the water which washed the shores being utilised. However, about the time I speak of the English government had determined, in the general interests of trade, to oppose this monopoly, and to open a way of communication up the river by force if necessary. The Paraguayans refused to accept the propositions made by the English, and prepared to fight for their so-called rights. They threw a formidable barrier across the stream, and made a most gallant resistance. It was on this occasion that Captain (now Admiral) H—— performed the courageous action which covered him with renown for the rest of his life. The enemy had, amongst other defences, placed a heavy iron chain across the river. This chain it was absolutely necessary to remove, and the gallant officer I refer to, who commanded the attack squadron, set a splendid example to us all by dashing forward and cutting with a cold chisel the links of this chain. The whole time he was thus at work he was exposed to a tremendous fire, having two men killed and two wounded out of the six he took with him. This deed, now almost forgotten by the public, can never be effaced from the memory of those who saw it done. That the fight was a severe one is evident from the fact that the vessel I belonged to had 107 shots in her hull, and thirty-five out of seventy men killed and wounded.

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It was after we had thus forced ourselves into intercourse with the Paraguayans that I saw an instance of want of tact which struck me as most remarkable. Fighting being over, diplomacy stepped in, and a man of somewhat high rank in that service was sent to make friendly overtures to the authorities. Can it be believed (I do not say it as a sneer against diplomacy, for this blunder was really *unique*), this big man had scarcely finished the pipe of peace which he smoked with the authorities, when he proposed to introduce vaccination and tracts among the people? Badly as the poor fellows felt the licking they had received, and much as they feared another should they give trouble to the invaders, they so resented our representative's meddling that he found it better to beat a hasty retreat, and to send a wiser man in his stead. But their fate was sealed, and from the moment the stranger put his foot into this interesting country dates its entire change. The system that the Jesuits established was quickly done away with. Paraguay is now a part of the Argentine Republic, it is generally at war with some of its neighbours, and its inhabitants are poor, disorderly, and wretched.

As I shall have, while telling the story of my life, to relate more serious events, I will, after recounting one more yarn, not weary my readers with the little uninteresting details of my youthful adventures, but pass over the next three years or so, at which time, after having returned to England, I was appointed to another ship going to South America, for the purpose of putting down the slave trade in the Brazils. The adventure to which I have referred was one that made a deep impression on my mind, as being of a most tragic nature.

While at Rio de Janeiro we were in the habit of visiting among the people, attending dances, &c. I always remarked that the pretty young Brazilian girls liked dancing with the fresh young English sailors better than with their mud-coloured companions of the male sex, the inhabitants of the country.

At the time I write of the English were not liked by the Brazilians, partly on account of the raid we were then making on the slave trade, partly through the usual jealousy always felt by the ignorant towards the enlightened. So with the men we were seldom or ever on good terms, but with the girls somehow sailors always contrive to be friends.

It was at one of the dances I have spoken of that the scene I am about to describe took place.

Among the pretty girls who attended the ball was one prettier perhaps than any of her companions; indeed, she was called the belle of Rio Janeiro. I will not attempt to portray her, but I must own she was far too bewitching for the peace of heart of her many admirers, and unhappily she was an unmitigated flirt in every sense of the word.

Now there was a young Brazilian nobleman who had, as he thought, been making very successful progress towards winning this girl's heart—if she had a heart. All was progressing smoothly enough till these hapless English sailors arrived.



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Then, perhaps with the object of making her lover jealous (a very common though dangerous game), Mademoiselle pretended (for I presume it was pretence) to be immensely smitten with one of them—a handsome young midshipman whom we will call A.

At the ball where the incident I refer to occurred, she danced once with him, twice with him, and was about to start with him a third time, when, to the astonishment of the lookers-on, of whom I formed part, the young Brazilian rushed into the middle of the room where the couple were standing, walked close up to them and spat in A.'s face.

Before the aggressor could look round him, he found himself sprawling on the floor, knocked by the angry Briton into what is commonly called 'a cocked hat.' Not a word was spoken. A. wiped his face, led his partner to a seat and came straight to me, putting his arm in mine and leading me into the verandah. The Brazilian picked himself up and came also into the verandah; in less time than I can write it a hostile meeting was settled, pistols were procured, and we (I say we, because I had undertaken to act as A.'s friend, and the Brazilian had also engaged a friend) sauntered into the garden as if for a stroll.

It was a most lovely moonlight night, such a night as can only be seen in the tropics.

I should mention that the chief actors in the coming conflict had neither of them seen twenty years, and we their seconds were considerably under that age. The aggressor, whose jealous fury had driven him almost to madness when he committed an outrageous affront on a stranger, was a tall, handsome, dark-complexioned young fellow. A. was also very good-looking, with a baby complexion, blue eyes and light curly hair, a very type of the Saxon race.

They both looked determined and calm. After proceeding a short distance we found a convenient spot in a lovely glade. It was almost as clear as day, so bright was the moonlight. The distance was measured (fourteen paces), the pistols carefully loaded. Before handing them to the principals we made an effort at arrangement, an effort too contemptuously received to be insisted upon, and we saw that any attempt at reconciliation would be of no avail without the exchange of shots; so, handing to each his weapon, we retired a short distance to give the signal for firing, which was to be done by my dropping a pocket-handkerchief. It was an anxious moment even for us, who were only lookers-on. I gave the words, one, two, three, and dropped the handkerchief.

The pistols went off simultaneously. To my horror I saw the young Brazilian spin round and drop to the ground, his face downwards; we rushed up to him and found that the bullet from A.'s pistol had gone through his brain. He was stone dead.

Then the solemnity of the whole affair dawned on us, but there was no time for thought. Something must be done at once, for revenge quick and fearful was sure to follow such a deed like lightning.



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We determined to hurry A. off to his ship, and I begged the young Brazilian to go into the house and break the sad news. The poor fellow, though fearfully cut up, behaved like a gentleman, walking slowly away so as to give us time to escape. As we passed the scene of gaiety the sounds of music and dancing were going on, just as when we left it. How little the jovial throng dreamt of the tragedy that had just been enacted within a few yards of them; of the young life cut down on its threshold!

We got on board all right, but such a terrible row was made about the affair that the ship to which A. belonged had to go to sea the next day, and did not appear again at Rio de Janeiro.

I, though not belonging to that vessel, was not allowed to land for many months.

CHAPTER IV.

Rio de Janeiro.

One word about Rio de Janeiro. Rio, as it is generally called, is perhaps one of the most lovely spots in the world. The beautiful natural bay and harbour are unequalled throughout the whole universe. Still, like the Bosphorus, the finest effect is made by Rio de Janeiro when looked at from the water. In the days of which I write yellow fever was unknown; now that fearful disease kills its thousands, aye, tens of thousands, yearly. The climate, though hot at times, is very good; in the summer the mornings are hot to a frying heat, but the sea breeze comes in regularly as clockwork, and when it blows everything is cool and nice. Life is indeed a lazy existence; there is no outdoor amusement of any kind to be had in the neighbourhood. As to shooting, there are only a few snipe to be found here and there, and while looking for these you must beware of snakes and other venomous reptiles, which abound both in the country and in town. I remember a terrible fright a large picnic party, at which I assisted, was thrown into while lunching in the garden of a villa, almost in the town of Rio, by a lady jumping up from her seat with a deadly whip-snake hanging on her dress. I once myself sat on an adder who put his fangs through the woollen stuff of my inexpressibles and could not escape. The same thing happened with the lady's dress; in that case also we caught the snake, as it could not disentangle its fangs.

In the country near Rio there are great snakes called the anaconda, a sort of boa-constrictor on a large scale. Once, while walking in the woods with some friends, we found a little Indian boy dead on the ground, one of these big snakes lying within a foot or so of him, also dead; the snake had a poisoned arrow in his brain, which evidently had been shot at him by the poor little boy, whose blow-pipe was lying by his side. The snake must have struck the boy before it died, as we found a wound on the boy's neck. This reptile measured twenty-two feet in length.



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By the way, a well-known author, Mrs. B——, tells a marvellous story about these snakes. She says that they always go in pairs, have great affection for each other, and are prepared on all occasions to resent affronts offered to either of them. She narrates that a peasant once killed a big anaconda, and that the other, or chum snake, followed the man several miles to the house where he had taken the dead one, got in by the window, and crushed the destroyer of his friend to death. I expect that some salt is necessary to swallow this tale, but such is the statement Mrs. B—— makes.

The most lovely birds and butterflies are found near Rio, and the finest collections in the world are made there. The white people are Portuguese by origin—not a nice lot to my fancy, though the ladies are as usual always nice, especially when young; they get old very soon through eating sweets and not taking exercise. There is very little poverty except among the free blacks, who are lazy and idle and somewhat vicious. I always have believed that the black man is an inferior animal—in fact, that the dark races are meant to be drawers of water and hewers of wood. I do not deny that they have souls to be saved, but I believe that their role in this world is to attend on the white man. The black is, and for years has been, educated on perfect equality with the white man, and has had every chance of improving himself—with what result? You could almost count on your fingers the names of those who have distinguished themselves in the battle of life.

Sometimes, while cruising off the coast of Rio de Janeiro looking out for slave vessels, we passed a very monotonous life. The long and fearfully hot mornings before the sea breeze sets in, the still longer and choking nights with the thermometer at 108 deg., were trying in the extreme to those accustomed to the fresh air of northern climates; but sailors have always something of the 'Mark Tapley' about them and are generally jolly under all circumstances, and so it was with me. One day, while longing for something to do, I discovered that the crew had been ordered to paint the ship outside; as a pastime I put on old clothes and joined the painting party. Planks were hung round the ship by ropes being tied to each end of the plank; on these the men stood to do their work. We had not been employed there very long when there was a cry from the deck that the ship was surrounded by sharks. It seems that the butcher had killed a sheep, whose entrails, having been thrown overboard, attracted these fearful brutes round the ship in great numbers. As may be imagined, this report created a real panic among the painters, for I believe we all feared a shark more than an enemy armed to the teeth. I at once made a hurried movement to get off my plank. As I did so the rope at one end slipped off, and so threw the piece of wood, to which I had to hang as on a rope, up and down the vessel's side, bringing my feet to

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within a very few inches of the water. On looking downwards I saw a great shark in the water, almost within snapping distance of my legs. I can swear that my hair stood on end with fear; though I held on like grim death, I felt myself going, yes, going, little by little right into the beast's jaws. At that moment, only just in time, a rope was thrown over my head from the deck above me, and I was pulled from my fearfully perilous position, more dead than alive. Now for revenge on the brutes who would have eaten me if they could! It was a dead calm, the sharks were still swimming round the ship waiting for their prey. We got a lot of hooks with chains attached to them, on which we put baits of raw meat. I may as well mention a fact not generally known, *viz.*, that a shark must turn on his back before opening his capacious mouth sufficiently to feed himself; when he turns he means business, and woe to him who is within reach of the man-eater's jaws. On this occasion what we offered them was merely a piece of meat, and most ravenously did they rush, turn on their backs, and swallow it, only to find that they were securely hooked, and could not bite through the chains that were fast to the hooks—in fact, that it was all up with them. Orders had been given by the commanding officer that the sharks were not to be pulled on board, partly from the dangerous action of their tails and jaws even when half dead, partly on account of the confusion they make while floundering about the decks; so we hauled them close to the top of the water, fired a bullet into their brains and cut them loose. We killed thirty that morning in this way, some of them eight to ten feet long.

The most horrid thing I know is to see, as I have done on more than one occasion, a man taken by a shark. You hear a fearful scream as the poor wretch is dragged down, and nothing remains to tell the dreadful tale excepting that the water is deeply tinged with blood on the spot where the unfortunate man disappeared. These ravenous man-eaters scent blood from an enormous distance, and their prominent upper fin, which is generally out of the water as they go along at a tremendous pace, may be seen at a great distance, and they can swim at the rate of a mile a minute. A shark somewhat reminds me of the torpedo of the present day, and in my humble opinion is much more dangerous.

Once we caught a large shark. On opening him we found in his inside a watch and chain quite perfect. Could it have been that some poor wretch had been swallowed and digested, and the watch only remained as being indigestible?

It is strange to see the contempt with which the black man treats a shark, the more especially when he has to do with him in shallow water. A negro takes a large knife and diving under the shark cuts its bowels open. If the water is deep the shark can go lower down than the man and so save himself, and if the nigger don't take care he will eat him; thus the black man never goes into deep water if he can help it, for he is always expecting a shark.



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CHAPTER V.

Slaver hunting.

Shortly after the duel at Rio I went to England, but to be again immediately appointed to a vessel on the Brazilian station.

It was at the time when philanthropists of Europe were crying aloud for the abolition of the African slave trade, never taking for a moment into consideration the fact that the state of the savage African black population was infinitely bettered by their being conveyed out of the misery and barbarism of their own country, introduced to civilization, given opportunities of embracing religion, and taught that to kill and eat each other was not to be considered as the principal pastime among human beings.

At the period I allude to (from 1841 to 1845) the slave trade was carried out on a large scale between the coast of Africa and South America; and a most lucrative trade it was, if the poor devils of negroes could be safely conveyed alive from one coast to the other. I say if, because the risk of capture was so great that the poor wretches, men, women, and children, were packed like herrings in the holds of the fast little sailing vessels employed, and to such a fearful extent was this packing carried on that, even if the vessels were not captured, more than half the number of blacks embarked died from suffocation or disease before arriving at their destination, yet that half was sufficient to pay handsomely those engaged in the trade.

On this point I propose giving examples and proofs hereafter, merely remarking, *en passant*, that had the negroes been brought over in vessels that were not liable to be chased and captured, the owners of such vessels would naturally, considering the great value of their cargo, have taken precautions against overcrowding and disease. Now, let us inquire as to the origin of these poor wretched Africans becoming slaves, and of their being sold to the white man. It was, briefly speaking, in this wise. On a war taking place between two tribes in Africa, a thing of daily occurrence, naturally many prisoners were made on both sides. Of these prisoners those who were not tender enough to be made into ragout were taken down to the sea-coast and sold to the slave-dealers, who had wooden barracks established ready for their reception.

Into these barracks, men, women, and children, most of whom were kept in irons to prevent escape, were bundled like cattle, there to await embarkation on board the vessels that would convey them across the sea.

Now, as the coast was closely watched on the African side, to prevent the embarkation of slaves, as it was on the Brazilian side, to prevent their being landed, the poor wretches were frequently waiting for weeks on the seashore undergoing every species of torment.



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At last the vessel to carry off a portion of them arrived, when they were rushed on board and thrown into the hold regardless of sex, like bags of sand, and the slaver started on her voyage for the Brazils. Perhaps while on her way she was chased by an English cruiser, in which case, so it has often been known to happen, a part of the living cargo would be thrown overboard, trusting that the horror of leaving human beings to be drowned would compel the officers of the English cruiser to slacken their speed while picking the poor wretches up, and thus give the slaver a better chance of escape. (This I have seen done myself, fortunately unavailingly.)

I will now ask the reader to bring his thoughts back to the coast of Brazil, where a good look-out was being kept for such vessels as I have mentioned as leaving the African coast with live cargo on board bound for the Brazilian waters. Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil, was the headquarters of the principal slave-owners. It was there that all arrangements were made regarding the traffic in slaves, the despatch of the vessels in which they were to be conveyed, the points on which they were to land, &c., and it was at Rio that the slave-vessels made their rendezvous before and after their voyages. It was there also that the spies on whose information we acted were to be found, and double-faced scoundrels they were, often giving information which caused the capture of a small vessel with few slaves on board, while the larger vessel, with twice the number, was landing her cargo unmolested.

As for myself, I was at the time of life when enterprise was necessary for my existence, and so keenly did I join in the slave-hunting mania that I found it dangerous to land in the town of Rio for fear of assassination.

My captain, seeing how enthusiastic I was in the cause, which promised prize-money if not renown, encouraged me by placing me in a position that, as a humble midshipman, I was scarcely entitled to, gave me his confidence, and thus made me still more zealous to do something, if only to show my gratitude.

Having picked up all the information possible as regarded the movements of the slave vessels, we started on a cruise, our minds set particularly on the capture of a celebrated craft called the 'Lightning,' a vessel renowned for her great success as a slave ship, whose captain declared (this made our mission still more exciting) that he would show fight, especially if attacked by English men-of-war boats when away from the protection of their ships.

I must mention that it was the custom of the cruisers on the coast of Brazil to send their boats on detached service, they (the boats) going in one direction while the vessels they belonged to went in another, only communicating every two or three days. Proud indeed for me was the moment when, arriving near to the spot on the coast where the 'Lightning' was daily expected with her live cargo, I left my ship



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in command of three boats, viz., a ten-oared cutter and two four-oared whale boats. I had with me in all nineteen men, well armed and prepared, as I imagined, for every emergency. The night we left our ship we anchored late under the shelter of a small island, and all hands being tired from a long row in a hot sun, I let my men go to sleep during the short tropical darkness. As soon as the day was breaking all hands were alert, and we saw with delight a beautiful rakish-looking brig, crammed with slaves, close to the island behind which we had taken shelter, steering for a creek on the mainland a short distance from us. I ought to mention that the island in question was within four miles of this creek. We immediately prepared for action, and while serving out to each man his store of cartridges, I found to my horror that the percussion tubes and caps for the boat's gun, the muskets and pistols, had been left on board the ship. What was to be done? no use swearing at anybody. However, we pulled boldly out from under the shelter of the island, thinking to intimidate the slaver into heaving to. In this we were grievously mistaken.

The vessel with her men standing ready at their guns seemed to put on a defiant air as she sailed majestically past us, and although we managed with lucifer matches to fire the boat's gun once or twice, she treated us with sublime contempt and went on her way into the creek, at the rate of six or seven miles an hour. Though difficult to attack the vessel in the day time without firearms, I determined if possible not to lose altogether this splendid brig. I waited therefore till after sunset, and then pulled silently into the creek with muffled oars. There was our friend securely lashed to the rocks. We dashed on board with drawn cutlasses, anticipating an obstinate resistance. We got possession of the deck in no time, but on looking round for someone to fight with, saw nothing but a small black boy who, having been roused up from a sort of dog-kennel in which he had been sleeping, first looked astonished and then burst out laughing, pointing as he did so to the shore. Yes, the shore to which the slaver brig was lashed was the spot where seven hundred slaves (or nearly that number, for we found three or four half-dead negroes in the hold) and the crew had all gone, and left us lamenting our bad luck. However, I took possession of the vessel as she lay, and though threatened day and night by the natives, who kept up a constant fire from the neighbouring heights and seemed preparing to board us, maintained our hold upon the craft until the happy arrival of my ship, which, with a few rounds of grape, soon cleared the neighbourhood of our assailants. I may mention that, in the event of our having been boarded, we had prepared a warm reception for our enemies in the shape of buckets of boiling oil mixed with lime, which would have been poured on their devoted heads while in the act of climbing up the side. As they kept, however, at a respectful distance, our remedy was not tried. The vessel, a splendid brig of 400 tons, was then pulled off her rocky bed, and I was sent in charge of her to Rio de Janeiro. And now comes the strangest part of my adventures on this occasion.



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On the early morning after I had parted company with my commanding officer, before the dawn, I ran accidentally right into a schooner loaded with slaves, also coming from Africa, bound to the same place as had been the brig, my prize.

Without the slightest hesitation, before the shock and surprise caused by the collision had given time for reflection or resistance, I took possession of this vessel, put the crew in irons, and hoisted English colours. There were 460 Africans on board, and what a sight it was!

The schooner had been eighty-five days at sea. They were short of water and provisions; three distinct diseases—namely, small-pox, ophthalmia, and diarrhoea in its worst form—had broken out while coming across among the poor doomed wretches.

On opening the hold we saw a mass of arms, legs, and bodies all crushed together. Many of the bodies to whom these limbs belonged were dead or dying. In fact, when we had made some sort of clearance among them we found in that fearful hold eleven dead bodies lying among the living freight. Water! water! was the cry. Many of them as soon as free jumped into the sea, partly from the delirious state they were in, partly because they had been told that, if taken by the English, they would be tortured and eaten. The latter I fancy they were accustomed to, but the former they had a wholesome dread of.

Can Mrs. Beecher Stowe beat this? It is, I can assure my readers, a very mild description of what I saw on board the first cargo of slaves I made the acquaintance of, and by which I was so deeply impressed, that I have ever since been sceptical of the benefits conferred upon the African race by our blockade—at all events, of the means employed to abolish slavery.

The strangest thing amid this 'confusion of horrors' was that children were constantly being born. In fact, just after I got on board, an unfortunate creature was delivered of a child close to where I was standing, and jumped into the sea, baby and all, immediately afterwards. She was saved with much difficulty; the more so, as she seemed to particularly object to being rescued from what nearly proved a watery grave.

After this unusual stroke of good luck, sending a prize crew on board my new capture, and allowing the slaver's crew to escape in the schooner's boat, as I considered these lawless ruffians an impediment to my movements, I proceeded on my voyage, and arrived safely in Rio harbour with my two prizes.

There I handed my live cargo over to the English authorities, who had a special large and roomy vessel lying in the harbour for the reception of the now free niggers.

It would be as well perhaps to state what became of the freed blacks. First of all they were cleaned, clothed (after a fashion), and fed; then they were sent to an English



colony, such for example as Demerara, where they had to serve seven years as apprentices (something, I must admit, very like slavery), after which they were free for ever and all. I fear they generally used their freedom in a way that made them a public nuisance wherever they were. However, they were free, and that satisfied the philanthropists.



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CHAPTER VI.

Slaver hunting (continued).

Now to return to my 'experiences.' As proud as the young sportsman when he has killed his first stag, I returned, keen as mustard, to my ship, which I found still cruising near to where I had left her. Some secret information that I had received while at Rio led me to ask my captain to again send me away with a force similar to that which I had under me before (with percussion caps this time), and allow me to station myself some fifty miles further down the coast. My request was granted, and away I went. This time, instead of taking shelter under an island, I ensconced my little force behind a point of land which enabled me by mounting on the rocks to sweep the horizon with a spy-glass, so that I could discover any vessel approaching the land while she was yet at a considerable distance.

There happened to be a large coffee plantation in my immediate neighbourhood, and I remarked that the inhabitants favoured us with the darkest of scowls whenever we met them. This made me believe (and I wasn't far out) that the slave-vessel I was looking out for was bringing recruits to the already numerous slaves employed on the said plantation. Two or three mornings after my arrival, I discovered a sail on the very far horizon; a vessel evidently bound to the immediate neighbourhood I had chosen as my look-out place. The winds were baffling and light, as usual in the morning in these latitudes, where, however, there is always a sea-breeze in the afternoon. So, being in no hurry, I sauntered about the shore with my double-barrelled gun in my hand, occasionally taking a look seaward. Suddenly I saw within a hundred yards of me a man leading two enormous dogs in a leash. The dogs were of a breed well known among slave-owners, as they were trained to run down runaway slaves. I believe the land of their origin is Cuba, as they are called Cuba bloodhounds.

Suspecting nothing I continued my lounge, turning my back on the man and his dogs. A few minutes afterwards I was startled by a rushing sound behind me. On turning quickly round I saw to my horror two huge dogs galloping straight at me. Quick as lightning I stood on the defensive, and when they with open mouths and bloodshot eyes were within five yards, I pulled the trigger. The gun missed fire with the first barrel. The second barrel luckily went off, scattering the brains of the nearest dog, the whole charge having entered his mouth, and gone through the palate into his brain. This occurrence seemed to check the advance of the second brute, who, while hesitating for a moment before coming at me, received a ball in his side from one of my sailors, who fortunately had observed what was going on and had come to my rescue. Without waiting an instant to see what had become of the man who had played me this murderous trick, I called my men together, launched the boats, and put out to sea.



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By this time the sea-breeze had set in, and I could see the vessel I had been watching, though still a considerable distance from the shore, was trimming her sails to the sea-breeze, and steering straight in for the very spot where I had been concealed. Signal after signal was made to her by her friends on the shore, in the shape of lighted fires (not much avail in the daytime) and the hoisting of flags, &c., but she seemed utterly to disregard the action of her friends. Satisfied, I imagine, that she had all but finished her voyage, seeing no cruiser and unsuspecting of boats, on she came.[1]

We got almost alongside of her before the people on board seemed to see us. When she did, evidently taken by surprise, she put her helm down, and throwing all her sails aback, snapped some of her lighter spars, thus throwing everything into confusion—confusion made worse by the fact that, with the view of immediate landing, two hundred or three hundred of the niggers had been freed from their confinement and were crowded on the deck. Taking advantage of this state of things we made our capture without a shot being fired.

In fact everything was done, as sailors say, 'before you could look round you,' the man at the helm replaced by one of my men, the crew bundled down into the slave-hold to give them a taste of its horrors, and the sails trimmed for seaward instead of towards the land. The captain, who seemed a decent fellow, cried like a child. He said: 'If I had seen you five minutes before you would never have taken me. Now I am ruined.' I consoled him as well as I could and treated him well, as he really seemed half a gentleman, if not entirely one. I found about six hundred slaves, men and women and children, on board this vessel, who as they had made a very rapid and prosperous voyage, were in a somewhat better state than those on board the last capture. Still goodness knows their state was disgusting enough. Ophthalmia had got a terrible hold of the poor wretches. In many of the cases the patient was stone blind. I caught this painful disease myself, and for several days couldn't see a yard.

Shortly after, having despatched our prize into Rio in charge of a brother midshipman, we were joined by another man-of-war cruiser, which had been sent to assist us in our work. As the officer in command of this vessel was of senior rank to my commander, he naturally took upon himself to organise another boat expedition, placing one of his own officers in command. With this expedition I was allowed to go, taking with me my old boats and their crews, with orders to place myself under the direction of Lieutenant A.C., the officer chosen by the senior in command.



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So we started with five boats provisioned and otherwise prepared for a cruise of twenty days. The lieutenant in charge did not think it wise to land, as a bad feeling towards us was known to exist among the inhabitants, who were all more or less slave-dealers, or interested in the success of the slave-vessels, so we had to live in our boats. Rather hard lines, sleeping on the boat's thwarts, &c. Still we had that 'balm of Gilead,' hope, to keep us alive, and our good spirits. Many a longing eye did I cast to the shore, where, in spite of the bloodhounds, I should like to have stretched my cramped limbs. Ten or twelve days passed in dodging about, doing nothing but keeping a good look-out, and we almost began to despair, when one fine morning we saw a large brig, evidently a slaver, running in towards the shore with a fresh breeze. Our boats were painted like fishing boats, and our men disguised as fishermen, as usual; so, apparently occupied with our pretended business, we gradually approached the slave-vessel. My orders were strictly to follow the movements or action of my superior. Then I witnessed a gallant act, such as I have not seen surpassed during forty years of active service that I have gone through since that time. Lieutenant A.C., who was in the leading boat, a large twelve-oared cutter, edged pretty near to the advancing vessel, and when quite close under her bows one man seemed to me to spring like a chamois on board. I saw the boat from which the man jumped make an ineffectual attempt to get alongside the vessel, that was going at the rate of six miles an hour, and then drop astern. I heard a pistol shot, and suddenly the vessel was thrown up in the wind with all her sails aback, thus entirely stopping her way (sailors will understand this). Not knowing precisely what had happened, we pulled like maniacs alongside of the slaver. To do this was, now that the vessel's way was stopped, comparatively easy. We dashed on board, and after a slight resistance on the part of the slaver's crew, in which two or three more men, myself among the number, were wounded, we took possession of the brig. There we found our lieutenant standing calmly at the helm, which was a long wooden tiller. He it was who had jumped on board alone, shot the man at the helm, put the said helm down with his leg, while in his hand he held his other pistol, with which he threatened to shoot any one who dared to touch him.

I fancy that his cool pluck had caused a panic among the undisciplined crew, a panic that our rapid approach tended much to increase. What astonished me was that nobody on board thought of shooting him before he got to the helm, in which case we never could have got on board the vessel, considering the speed she was going through the water. What he did was a glorious piece of pluck, that in these days would have been rewarded with the Victoria Cross as the least recompense they could have given to so gallant an officer. Poor fellow! all the reward he got, beyond the intense admiration of those who saw him, was a bad attack of small-pox from the diseased *animals* (there is no other name for negroes in the state they were in) on board the slave-vessel, which somewhat injured the face of one of the handsomest men I ever saw. He is now an admiral, has done many gallant acts since then, but none could beat what he did on that memorable morning.



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I have said that I was among those who were wounded on this occasion. What my friend A.C. did so far outshone anything that I had accomplished, that it is hardly worth while speaking of my share in the fray. However, as I am writing sketches from my life, I will not omit to describe the way in which I was wounded. We were, as I have said, making a rush to assist our gallant leader, who was alone on board the slaver. The reader will have seen that our business was boarding and fighting our enemy hand to hand. As I was making a jump on board I saw the white of the eye of a great black man turned on me; he brandished a huge axe, which I had a sort of presentiment was intended for me. I sprang as it were straight at my destiny, for as I grasped the gunnel down came the axe, and I received the full edge of the beastly thing across the back of my hand. I fell into the water, but was picked up by my sailors, and managed to get on board again. Had it not been for a clever young assistant surgeon, who bound up the wound in a most scientific manner, I should probably have quite lost the use of my hand; the mark remains across my knuckles to this day.

CHAPTER VII.

Love and murder.

I was once sent from Rio to Demerara, an English colony on the coast of Brazil, with a cargo of blacks that we had freed. Then it was that I had a good opportunity of studying the character of these people certainly in their primitive state, and if ever men and women resembled wild animals it was my swarthy charges. When I arrived at Demerara I handed them over to their new masters, to whom they were apprenticed for seven years, and from all I can understand they were, during their apprenticeship, treated pretty much as slaves in every respect.

During the time I visited Demerara (and I fancy it is very slightly changed now) it was one of the vilest holes in creation. It is built on a low sandy point of land at the entrance of a great river, and is almost the hottest place on the earth. Mosquitos in thousands of millions; nothing for the natives to do but to cultivate sugar-canes and to perspire. There were two crack regiments quartered at Demerara, who, having to withstand the dreadful monotony of doing nothing, took I fear to living rather too well; the consequence was that many a fine fellow had been carried off by yellow fever. For my part, I took a rather high flight in the way of pastime by falling (as I imagined) desperately in love with the governor's daughter. The governor, I must tell my readers, was a very great swell, a general, a K.C.B., &c., and his daughter was a mighty pretty girl, much run after by the garrison; so it was thought great impertinence on my part, as a humble sub-lieutenant, to presume to make love to the reigning, if not the only, beauty in the place.



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However, audacity carried me on, and I soon became No. 1 in the young lady's estimation. I used to ride with her, spent the evenings in the balcony of Government House with her, sent her flowers every morning, and so on, till at last people began to talk, and steps were taken by her numerous admirers to stop my wild career. This was done in a somewhat startling way (premeditated, as I found out afterwards). One evening I was playing at whist, one of my opponents being a momentarily discarded lover of my young lady; I thought he was looking very distraught; however, things went off quietly enough for some time, till on some trifling question arising concerning the rules of the game, the young man suddenly and quite gratuitously insulted me most grossly, ending his insolent conduct by throwing his cards in my face. This was more than I could put up with, so I called him out, and the next morning put a ball into his ankle, which prevented him dancing for a long time to come. He, being the best dancer in the colony, was rather severely punished; it seems that he had undertaken to bell the cat, hardly expecting such unpleasant results.

On returning home after the hostile meeting I found a much more formidable adversary in the shape of the governor himself, who was stamping furiously up and down the verandah of my apartment. He received me with, 'What the d— I do you mean, young sir, by making love to my daughter? you are a mere boy.' (I was twenty and did not relish his remark.) 'What means have you got?'

After the old gentleman's steam had gone down a little I replied, 'Really, general, I hardly know how to answer you. Your daughter and I are very good friends, the place is most detestably dull, there is nothing to do, and if we amuse ourselves with a little love-making, surely there can be no great harm.' This rejoinder of mine made things worse; I thought the old boy would have had a fit. At last he said, 'The mail steamer leaves for England to-morrow; you shall go home by her, I order you to do so!' I replied that I should please myself, and that I was not under his orders. The general went away uttering threats. After he was gone I thought seriously over the matter. I calculated that my income of 120_l._ a year would scarcely suffice to keep a wife, and I decided to renounce my dream of love. I went to pay a farewell visit to my young lady, but found that she was locked up, so away I went and soon forgot all about it. Shortly afterwards I heard that the governor's daughter married the man whose leg I had lamed for his impertinence to me.

My last adventure while employed in the suppression of the slave trade is perhaps worth describing.

By international law it was ruled that a vessel on her way to Africa, if fitted out in a certain manner, whereby it was evident that she was employed in the nefarious traffic of slavery, was liable to capture and condemnation by the mixed tribunals, or in other words became the lawful prize of her captors.



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While cruising off Pernambuco we boarded a Portuguese vessel bound to Africa, so evidently fitted out for the purpose of slave trade that my captain took possession of her, and sent me to convey her to the Cape of Good Hope for adjudication. It was the usual thing to send the captain of a vessel so captured as a prisoner on board his ship, so that he might be interrogated at the trial. In this case the master and three of his crew were sent. The prize crew consisted of myself and six men. Now the captain was an exceedingly gentlemanlike man, a good sailor, and a first-rate navigator.

At first I treated him as a prisoner, but by degrees he insinuated himself into my good graces to such an extent that after a while I invited him to mess with me, in fact, made a friend of him, little thinking of the serpent I was nourishing.

For several days all went well. I was as unsuspecting as a child of foul play. We lived together and worked our daily navigation together, played at cards together, in fact were quite chums. The three men who were supposed to be prisoners were allowed considerable liberty, and as they had, as I found out afterwards, a private stock of grog stowed away somewhere, which they occasionally produced and gave to my men, they managed to be pretty free to do as they wished. For all that, I ordered that the three prisoners should be confined below during the night.

As the weather was very hot I always slept in a little place on deck called a bunk, a thing more like a dog-kennel than aught else I can compare it to, excepting that the hole for entrance and exit was somewhat larger than that generally used for the canine species.

I always slept with a pistol (revolvers were unknown in those days) under my pillow. Luckily for me that I did so, as the result will show.

I had remarked (this I thought of afterwards) that the prisoner captain and some of his men had been whispering together a good deal lately; but not being in the slightest degree suspicious I thought nothing of it.

One evening I retired to my sleeping place as usual, after having passed a pleasant chatty evening with my prisoner. I was settling myself to sleep, in fact I think I was asleep as far as it would be called so, for I had from habit the custom of sleeping with one eye open, when I saw or *felt* the flash of a knife over my head. The entrance to my couch was very limited, so that my would-be murderer had some difficulty in striking the fatal blow. Instinct at once showed me my danger.

To draw my pistol from under my pillow was the work of a second; to fire it into the body of the man who was trying to stab me, that of another. A groan and a heavy fall on the deck told me what had happened, and springing out of my sleeping berth I found my *ci-devant* friend the captain lying on his face, dead as a door nail. In the meantime I heard a row in the fore-part of the ship. On going forward

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I saw one of the prisoners in the act of falling overboard, and another extended full length on the deck, while my stalwart quarter-master was flourishing a handspike with which he had knocked one of his assailants overboard and floored the other. Now it will be asked what was the man at the wheel doing? Hereby hangs a tale. He swore that he heard or saw nothing. Considering this sufficient evidence of his guilt, I put him in irons. Shortly afterwards he confessed the whole story. It seems that a conspiracy had been planned among the prisoners to retake the ship—that the man at the wheel had been bribed to let free two of the prisoners, under promise of a large reward if the result had been the retaking of the ship.

The only provision he made was that he was to take no murderous action against his countrymen. The man at the helm and the quarter-master being the only men on deck, and I being gone to roost, all seemed easy enough, but Providence willed it otherwise.

I buried the captain in the sea without further ceremony; the man who fell overboard I suppose was drowned (I did not try to pick him up); the man knocked down was put in irons, and all went smoothly for the rest of the voyage; but when I arrived at the Cape of Good Hope without the captain, the lawyers who defended the ship wanted to make out that I had murdered him, and I was very nearly sent to prison on the charge of murder.

In the above pages I have endeavoured to give some notion of what used to go on in old times when there were no steam launches, and when, I may be forgiven for saying it, sailors were in every sense of the word sailors.

I could recount many more adventures somewhat similar to those I have described, but I do not wish to bore my readers or appear egotistical in their eyes. The only comparison I would make in regard to our doings in those days is with the work done by the blockading squadron during the civil war in America; for if ever men required plucky endurance and self-denial it was the poor fellows who had to keep, or endeavour to keep, blockade-runners if not slavers from communicating with the stormy shores of Florida and South Carolina. They are too modest now to tell us what they went through. Perhaps forty years hence they will do as I am doing, and recount some of their adventures, which I am convinced would quite put into the shade anything I or my boat's crew ever did.

I do not wish to be mistaken in my remarks about the black race. I will not venture to give an opinion as to what Providence meant to be done with those interesting creatures. I only assert, and this I do from my own personal experience, that a black man is a happier and wiser man in America than he is in his own wretched country, North and South.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE QUEEN'S YACHT.

I returned from the Cape to England. On arriving there I was appointed to the Queen's yacht, as a reward for what their lordships at the Admiralty were good enough to designate my active and zealous services while employed in suppression of the slave trade.



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To be appointed to Her Majesty's yacht was in those days considered a very great distinction. Even now the Queen invariably chooses officers who have seen what is called 'service.' Such an appointment, apart from the honour of being so near Her Majesty, always tends to rapid promotion.

The Queen at the time I write of was very fond of cruising in her yacht, paying visits to foreign potentates, &c. Her Majesty had been then five years married, with a young family springing up around her, and her beloved husband the Prince Consort always with her, participating in all her pleasures; so we, the officers of the Royal yacht, had a rare time of it, were made a lot of wherever we went, and thought ourselves very great men indeed. Amongst other trips, we conveyed the Royal family up the Rhine, where Her Majesty visited the King of Prussia at Stolzenfels.

Afterwards we went to the Chateau d'Eu, where Her Majesty was received by King Louis Philippe and the Reine Amelie.

I shall never forget the condescending kindness of Her Majesty and Prince Albert to all on board the Royal yacht. As to the Prince Consort, he treated the officers more in the light of companions than subordinates, always ready to join us in a cigar and its accompanying friendly conversation.

Apropos of smoking, I cannot refrain from mentioning a little incident that happened on board the 'Victoria and Albert,' that I, for one, shall never forget. Her Gracious Majesty never approved of smoking, and it was only through the kind consideration of the Prince Consort that we were allowed to indulge in an occasional cigar in the cow-house. The cow-house was a little place fitted up for two pretty small Alderney cows, kept specially for supplying milk and butter for the Royal table.

Her Majesty was very fond of these animals and had the habit of visiting them every day, and the young Princes used to be held up to look in at the window, out of which there was room for the favoured cows to stretch their heads. One evening we were smoking as usual when I espied a pot of blue paint on the deck of the cow-house, with, as bad luck would have it, a brush in the pot. I cannot say what induced me, but I deliberately took the brush and painted the tips of the noses and the horns of both animals a pretty light blue. Having done this I thought no more of the matter. The next morning Her Majesty—well, I think I had better say no more about it. I, the culprit, was denounced and had to keep out of the way for a day or two. Then it was that the good-natured Prince proved himself a friend, and got me out of my scrape.

I passed two of the happiest years of my life in the Queen's yacht, after which I was promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and appointed to a ship in the Mediterranean, where I passed for several years the usual humdrum life of a naval officer during times of profound peace.



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However, while serving as a lieutenant in the Mediterranean, I had the advantage of taking part in one of the most interesting political events of the century, namely, the flight of Pius IX. from Rome. The ship I was in was stationed at Civita Vecchia, the sea-port of Rome, partly in order to protect British interests—that is, the persons and properties of British subjects—partly with the object of taking that half-hearted part in religious politics which has always been such a humiliating role for England.

We had an accredited agent, a nondescript sort of person, representing England at the court of Pope Pius IX. This gentleman's duty was to watch and report, but not to act. It was through him that England's idea of the policy to be pursued by the Pope was conveyed. We did not, and we did, want to interfere. The question of the balance of power of Italy as an independent nation was too important to neglect; it was impossible to separate altogether religion and politics. However, at the time I write of things were rushing to a crisis.

The Pope, who a short time previously had been considered the great supporter of liberty, was now looked upon as its enemy. Garibaldi was, in a mad sort of way, fighting in its cause—at least, he professed to do so. He had marched with a band of howling volunteers to the gates of Rome, and established himself there as its conqueror, virtually making the Pope a prisoner in the Vatican. In the meantime France interfered in the Pope's cause, and sent General Oudinot with a small army to dislodge Garibaldi. England's doubtful diplomatic relations made it necessary to choose every sort of means of communicating with the Pope, and I had the honour on more than one occasion of being the messenger chosen to communicate, not only with His Holiness, but between Garibaldi and the French commander. On the first occasion I was sent to Rome with despatches from Lord Palmerston to be delivered (so said my orders) into the Pope's own hands.

On my arrival at Rome I went straight to the Quirinal and asked to see Cardinal Antonelli. When I informed him of my instructions, he said at once, 'You may give your despatches to me; you cannot expect to see His Holiness.' 'No, sir; to the Pope I will give my despatches, or take them back again,' and from this decision no persuasions or threats would move me. Finding me obstinate the Cardinal at last took me with him into a room where the Pope was sitting. His Holiness seemed in a great state of anxiety, but was most kind and condescending. He gave me his hand to kiss, and congratulated me on having been so firm in obeying orders in relation to my despatches. I afterwards found that these despatches influenced very much the important step taken by Pio Nono a few days afterwards.

Subsequently I several times conveyed communications between General Garibaldi and General Oudinot. The former had most pluckily taken possession of an important position inside the walls of Rome, and it was a hard piece of work to dislodge him.



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I used to gallop in between General Oudinot's camp and Garibaldi's headquarters, having on my arm a red scarf for a sign that I was not a belligerent. My scarf was not much use, however, as I was generally fired at all the time that I was passing the space between the French camp and Garibaldi's headquarters in Rome.

I was amused by the audacity with which Garibaldi resisted the French army. I fancy he wanted to delay matters so that the Pope should be induced to take the ill-advised step of leaving Rome, and in this the republican general succeeded. What went on in Rome, the way in which the Pope escaped, &c., I am not able to relate. All I know is that one fine morning a simple carriage arrived from Rome at Civita Vecchia, bringing a portly individual enveloped in the large cloak of an English coachman, and another man in ordinary apparel. They strolled down to the place of embarkation, and went quietly on board, not (as was expected) the English man-of-war, but a French vessel-of-war which was lying with her steam up.

This vessel then left the harbour, almost unnoticed, and it was not for hours afterwards that we heard that His Holiness Pius IX. was the humble-looking person who had embarked before our eyes, and thus got away safely to Gaeta.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE BALTIC.

In 1854 the war (commonly called the Crimean war) broke out, and I was appointed first lieutenant of H.M.S.— for service in the Baltic.

I shall never forget the excitement among us all when, after so many years of inactivity, we were called upon to defend the honour of our country. Unfortunately for old England the Baltic fleet was put under the command of Sir C. N——, 'fighting old Charley' as he was called, though it was not long before we discovered that there was not much fight left in him. It might well be said by those generously inclined towards him, in the words of the old song, that the

'Bullets and the gout
Had so knocked his hull about,
That he'd never more be fit for sea.'

A finer fleet never sailed or steamed from Spithead than that destined for the Baltic in 1854. The signal from its commander, 'Lads, war is declared! Sharpen your cutlasses and the day's your own,' sent a thrill of joy through every breast. After following the melting ice up the Baltic Sea to within almost reach of the guns of Cronstadt, we waited till the ice had disappeared, and then went in as we thought for the attack.



The ship to which I belonged being a steamer, and drawing much less water than the line-of-battle ships, led the way. A grander sight could not be conceived than that of twenty splendid line-of-battle ships, formed in two lines, steaming straight up to the frowning batteries of Cronstadt. On our approaching the batteries a shot was fired, and fell alongside the ship I was in, which, as I said, was leading for the purpose of sounding, when, to our astonishment and disgust, the signal was made from the flag-ship to the fleet 'Stop!' and immediately afterwards to 'anchor.'



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It is not for me to say the reason 'why.' All that I can vouch for is that, in the general opinion of competent judges, had we gone on we could have taken or destroyed Cronstadt, instead of which—what was done? They sent to England for special boats to be made ready for the next summer, when the attack would be made on Cronstadt.

We remained a few days at anchor off that place, when some half of the fleet were detached to the Aland Islands, where an insignificant fort called Bomarsund was to be attacked—not by the English and French fleets, who were fit to do any mortal thing, but by an army fetched from France. When the army came, the poor little fort attacked by the fleet on the seaside, and on the shore by the soldiers, after firing a few shots surrendered. During the attack I was appointed acting commander of H.M.S.—, and was mentioned honourably in despatches.

Many promotions were made for the taking of Bomarsund, but I fancy I had as usual given my opinion too freely, as I was left out in the cold. I shall never forget old Charley's answer to me when I applied for my promotion, it was so worthy of him. He said, 'Don't ye come crying to me, Sir; you are a lord's son: I'll have nothing to do wi' ye.'

Immediately after the capture of Bomarsund, the admiral detached a small squadron under Captain S—— to reconnoitre the Russian port of Abo. Of that squadron the vessel of which I was commander formed one. We left with sealed orders, which were not to be opened until we arrived at, or near to, our destination.

On sighting the enemy's port we perceived that every preparation was being made to give us a warm reception. A council of war was held on board the senior officer's ship, at which council the sealed orders were opened, when to our disgust it was found within that we were ordered 'not to fight, merely to reconnoitre.'

Sickening humiliation! There were the Russian gunboats inside the bar of the harbour of Abo, firing at us with all their might. The forts on the heights, such as they were, very insignificant temporary batteries of field-pieces, had commenced to get the range of the ships; but as we were not to fight, we took a sulky shot or two at the enemy and retired.

To this day I cannot understand the policy that actuated this weak, vacillating conduct on the part of our chief. But some idea may be given of his fighting notions by the following occurrence, of which I was a witness.

One morning despatches arrived from England. A signal was made from the flag-ship for commanding officers to repair on board that vessel. On our arrival there, we were asked to sit down to breakfast. Our chief, who was opening his letters, suddenly threw a despatch over the table to S——, the admiral of the fleet, saying, 'What would ye do, mun, if ye received a letter like this?' S——, after reading the letter said, 'If I received a letter like that, I'd attack Revel or Sveaborg if I lost half my fleet.' Our chief's answer I

shall never forget. It was: 'I haven't got nerve to do it, and I'm d——d well sure C—— hasn't.' There are many living besides myself who can vouch for the accuracy of this statement.



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I shall say no more of the doings of the English fleet in the Baltic during that year. Suffice it, that if ever open mutiny was displayed—not by the crews of the ships, but by many of the captains, men who attained the highest rank in their profession—it was during the cruise in the Baltic in 1854: and no wonder.

Many gallant deeds were performed by single ships, but the fleet did absolutely nothing, except help to capture Bomarsund. I returned to England disgusted and disheartened. The next year the commander-in-chief was changed; I was appointed to his ship, and we went again to the Baltic, taking with us all the necessary appurtenances for bombarding forts and attacking the enemy's coast.

As soon as the melting of the ice permitted we arrived off Cronstadt, and found that the Russians had not been asleep during our absence for the winter months; for they had defended the approaches to that place to such an extent, that an attack was considered (and on this occasion there was no difference of opinion) most unadvisable. So we fell back on Sveaborg, which place was bombarded by the combined fleets, I venture to think most successfully, and I believe, had we had a force to land, we could have taken possession of that large and important fortress.

Our losses during the operation were small on board the squadron of mortar-boats which I had the good luck to command—some fifty-eight men *hors de combat*.

In this service I received my promotion to the rank of commander, and returned to England.

Peace was made between Russia and England, previous to which, however, I was appointed to a vessel in the Mediterranean which formed part of the fleet off Sebastopol. Unfortunately, I arrived too late to see much active service there.

While serving as a commander in the Mediterranean, I was principally under the command of Sir Wm. M——, a man whose reputation as being the smartest officer in the navy, I must venture to say, I think was greatly exaggerated, though he was doubtless what is called a 'smart officer.'

His idea was to rule with a rod of iron, and never to encourage anyone by praising zealous and active service. He used to say, 'I am here to find fault with, not to praise, officers under my command.' So many a fine fellow's zeal was damped by knowing that no encouragement would follow in the way of appreciation from his chief, however much he might have merited it.

I cannot refrain from recounting a very amusing incident that occurred in connection with my command of H.M.S. F——. I may mention that, differing as I did most materially with the system of discipline followed by the commander-in-chief, I was no favourite of his.



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One day, however, I was somewhat surprised at being ordered to prepare for the official inspection of my ship, and by no less a person than Sir W. M——himself. I must mention that one of the crotchets of the chief was that vessels such as mine—namely, a gunboat of the first class—could be floated off the shore, in case of their stranding, by water-casks being lashed round them. So orders were given that all vessels of that class were to lumber their decks with water-casks. I did so, according to orders; but, not having the least confidence in the manner in which the commander-in-chief proposed to employ them, I utilised them, as will be seen presently, for an entirely different purpose.

The day of my ship's inspection was evidently not one of my lucky days. To begin with, a horrid little monkey belonging to the crew—amusing himself running about in the hammock-nettings near to the gangway over which the great man had to pass—seeing something he thought unusual, made a rush as the commander-in-chief was stepping on board, stooped down, and deliberately took the cocked hat off his head, dropped it into the sea, then started up the rigging chattering with delight at the mischief he had done. The cocked hat was at once recovered, wiped dry, and placed in its proper place. The admiral, always stern as a matter of principle, looked, after this incident, sterner than usual, hardly recognised me except by a formal bow, then proceeded to muster the officers and crew. This over, he commenced to walk round the deck. I remarked with pleasure his countenance change when he saw how neatly his pet water-casks were painted and lashed to the inner gunnel of the ship. He said quite graciously, 'I am glad to see, Captain Hobart, that you pay such attention to my orders.' I began to think I was mistaken in my idea of the man; but, alas! for my exuberance of spirits and satisfaction. While the admiral was closely examining one of his pet casks, his face came almost in contact with the opening of the barrel, when, to his and my horror, a pretty little spaniel put out his head and licked the great man on the nose.

I shall never forget the admiral's countenance; he turned blue with anger, drew himself up, ordered his boat to be manned, and walked over the side not saying a word to anyone.

The facts which led to this untoward occurrence were that, seeing the necessity of having my decks crowded with what I considered useless lumber, in the form of water-casks, I had utilised them by making them into dog-kennels. The admiral hated dogs, hated sport of all kind, and, after what occurred, I fancy hated me. Well, I didn't love him; I never saw him again.

The very next day I was ordered to the coast of Syria: just what I wanted, *i.e.*, to be out of the commander-in-chief's way, and to have some good shooting.



CHAPTER X.

BLOCKADE-RUNNING.

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On receiving my rank as post-captain, I found myself shelved, as it were, for four years, while waiting my turn for a command. This was according to the rules of the navy, so there was no getting out of it. What was I to do? I consulted several of my friends who were in a similar position, who, like myself, did not wish to remain idle so long, so we looked about us for some enterprise, as something to do.

The upshot of it was that we thought of trying if we could not conceive some plan for breaking through the much-talked-of blockade of the Southern States of America, then in revolt against the government of Washington. Four of us young post-captains took this decision, and as it would have been, perhaps, considered *infra dig.* for real naval officers to engage in such an enterprise, we lent our minds, if not our bodies, to certain *alter egos*, whom we inspired, if we did not personally control, as to their line of conduct. My man I will call Roberts, whose adventures I now give, and in whose name I shall write. There are people who insist that I was Captain Roberts; all that such people have to do is to prove I was that 'miscreant,' whoever he may have been. The following is his narrative:—

During the late civil war in America the executive government undertook the blockade of more than 3,000 miles of coast, and though nothing could exceed the energy and activity of the naval officers so employed, the results were very unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it was not till absolute possession was taken of the forts at the entrance of the great harbours, such as Charleston, Mobile, and Wilmington, that blockade-running was stopped.

I trust that our American friends will not be too severe in their censures on those engaged in blockade-running; for, I say it with the greatest respect for and admiration of enterprise, had they been lookers-on instead of principals in the sad drama that was enacted, they would have been the very men to take the lead. It must be borne in mind that the excitement of fighting did not exist. One was always either running away or being deliberately pitched into by the broadsides of the American cruisers, the slightest resistance to which would have constituted piracy; whereas capture without resistance merely entailed confiscation of cargo and vessel.

The vessel I had charge of—which I had brought out from England, was one of the finest double-screw steamers that had ever been built by D——n; of 400 tons burden, 250 horse-power, 180 feet long, and 22 feet beam—and was, so far as sea-going qualities, speed, &c., went, as handy a little craft as ever floated. Our crew consisted of a captain, three officers, three engineers, and twenty-eight men, including firemen, that is, ten seamen and eighteen firemen. They were all Englishmen, and as they received very high wages, we managed to have picked men. In fact, the men-of-war on the West India station found it a difficult matter to prevent their crews from deserting, so great was the temptation offered by the blockade-runners.



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I will begin by explaining how we prepared the vessel for the work. This was done by reducing her spars to a light pair of lower masts, without any yards across them; the only break in their sharp outline being a small crow's-nest on the foremast, to be used as a look-out place. The hull, which showed about eight feet above water, was painted a dull grey colour to render her as nearly as possible invisible in the night. The boats were lowered square with the gunnels. Coal was taken on board of a smokeless nature (anthracite). The funnel, being what is called 'telescope,' lowered close down to the deck. In order that no noise might be made, steam was blown off under water. In fact, every ruse was resorted to to enable the vessel to evade the vigilance of the American cruisers, who were scattered about in great numbers all the way between Bermuda and Wilmington—the port at the time I write of most frequented by blockade-runners. While speaking of the precautions used I may mention that among the fowls taken on board as provisions, no cocks were allowed, for fear of their proclaiming the whereabouts of the blockade-runner. This may seem ridiculous, but it was very necessary.

The distance from Bermuda to Wilmington (the port we were bound to) is 720 miles. We started in the evening. For the first twenty-four hours we saw nothing to alarm us, but at daylight the second day there was a large American cruiser not half a mile from us, right ahead, who, before we could turn round, steamed straight at us, and commenced firing rapidly, but very much at random, the shot and shell all passing over or wide of us.

Fortunately, according to orders to have full steam on at daybreak, we were quite prepared for a run; and still more fortunately a heavy squall of wind and rain that came on helped us vastly, as we were dead to windward of the enemy; and having no top-weights we soon dropped him astern. He most foolishly kept yawing, to fire his bow-chasers, losing ground every time he did so. By eight o'clock we were out of range—unhit; and by noon out of sight of anything but smoke.

Luckily, the chase had not taken us much off our course, as the consumption of coal during a run of this sort, with boilers all but bursting from high pressure of steam, was a most serious consideration—there being no coal in the Confederate ports, where wood was only used, which would not suit our furnaces.

We were now evidently in very dangerous waters, steamers being reported from our mast-head every hour, and we had to keep moving about in all directions to avoid them; sometimes stopping to let one pass ahead of us, at another time turning completely round, and running back on our course. Luckily, we were never seen or chased. Night came on, and I had hoped that we should have made rapid progress till daybreak unmolested. All was quiet until about one o'clock in the morning, when suddenly, to our dismay, we found a



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steamer close alongside of us. How she had got there without our knowledge is a mystery to me even now. However, there she was, and we had hardly seen her before a stentorian voice howled out, 'Heave-to in that steamer, or I'll sink you.' It seemed as if all was over, but I determined to try a ruse before giving the little craft up. So I answered, 'Ay, ay, sir, we are stopped.' The cruiser was about eighty yards from us. We heard orders given to man and arm the quarter-boats, we saw the boats lowered into the water, we saw them coming, we heard the crews laughing and cheering at the prospect of their prize. The bowmen had just touched the sides of our vessel with their boat-hooks when I whispered down the tube into the engine-room, 'Full speed ahead!' and away we shot into the darkness.

I don't know what happened; whether the captain of the man-of-war thought that his boats had taken possession, and thus did not try to stop us, or whether he stopped to pick up his boats in the rather nasty sea that was running, some one who reads this may know. All I can say is, that not a shot was fired, and that in less than a minute the pitch darkness hid the cruiser from our view. This was a great piece of luck.

All the next day we passed in dodging about, avoiding the cruisers as best we could, but always approaching our post.

During the day we got good observations with which our soundings agreed; and at sunset our position was sixty miles due east of the entrance to Wilmington river, off which place were cruising a strong squadron of blockading ships. The American blockading squadron, which had undertaken the almost impossible task of stopping all traffic along 3,000 miles of coast, consisted of nearly a hundred vessels of different sorts and sizes—*bona-fide* men-of-war, captured blockade-runners, unemployed steam-packets, with many other vessels pressed into government service. Speed and sufficient strength to carry a long gun were the only requisites, the Confederate men-of-war being few and far between. These vessels were generally well commanded and officered, but badly manned. The inshore squadron off Wilmington consisted of about thirty vessels, and lay in the form of a crescent facing the entrance to Cape Fear river, the centre being just out of range of the heavy guns mounted on Fort Fisher, the horns, as it were, gradually approaching the shore on each side; the whole line or curve covered about ten miles.

The blockade-runners had been in the habit of trying to get between the vessel at either extremity; and the coast being quite flat and dangerous, without any landmark, excepting here and there a tree somewhat taller than others, the cruisers generally kept at a sufficient distance to allow of this being done. The runner would then crawl close along the shore, and when as near as could be judged opposite the entrance of the river, would show a light on the vessel's inshore side, which was answered by a very indistinct



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light being shown on the beach, close to the water's edge, and another at the background. These two lights being got into a line was a proof that the opening was arrived at; the vessels then steered straight in and anchored under the Confederate batteries at Fort Fisher. More vessels were lost crawling along this dangerous beach than were taken by the cruisers. I have seen three burning at one time, for the moment a vessel struck she was set fire to, to prevent the blockaders getting her off when daylight came.

This system of evading the cruisers, however, having been discovered, it was put a stop to by a very ingenious method, by which several vessels were captured and an end put to that little game. Of course I can only conjecture the way in which it was done, but it seemed to me to be thus: At the extreme end of the line of blockaders lay one of them with a kedge anchor, down so close to the shore that she left but a very little space for the blockade-runner to pass between her and the beach. The captain of the runner, however, trusting to his vessel's speed and invisibility, dashed through this space, and having got by the cruiser thought himself safe. Poor fellow! he was safe for a moment, but in such a trap that his only chance of getting out of it was by running on shore or giving up. For no sooner had he passed than up went a rocket from the cruiser who had seen the runner rush by, and who now moved a little further in towards the shore, so as to stop her egress by the way she went in; and the other vessels closing round by a pre-arranged plan, the capture or destruction of the blockade-runner was a certainty.

Some of the captains most pluckily ran their vessels on shore, and frequently succeeded in setting fire to them; but the boats of the cruisers were sometimes too sharp in their movements to admit of this being done, and the treatment of those who tried to destroy their vessels was, I am sorry to say, very barbarous and unnecessary. Moreover, men who endeavoured to escape by jumping overboard after the vessel was on shore were often fired at by grape and shell, in what seemed to me a very unjustifiable manner. Great allowance, however, must be made for the men-of-war's men, who after many hard nights of dreary watching constantly under weigh, saw their well-earned prize escaping by being run on shore and set fire to, just as they imagined they had got possession. On several occasions they have been content to tow the empty shell of an iron vessel off the shore, her valuable cargo having been destroyed by fire.

But I have left my little craft lying as was stated about sixty miles from the entrance of the river. I had determined to try a new method of getting through the blockading squadron, seeing that the usual plan, as described above, was no longer feasible or, at least, advisable. I have mentioned that our position was well defined by observations and soundings, so we determined to run straight through the blockaders,



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and to take our chance. When it was quite dark we started steaming at full speed. It was extremely thick on the horizon, but clear overhead, with just enough wind and sea to prevent the little noise the engines and screws made being heard. Every light was out—even the men's pipes; the masts were lowered on to the deck; and if ever a vessel was invisible the *D—n* was that night.

We passed several outlying cruisers, some unpleasantly near, but still we passed them. All seemed going favourably, when suddenly I saw through my glasses the long low line of a steamer right ahead, lying as it were across our bows so close that it would have been impossible to pass to the right or left of her without being seen. A prompt order given to the engine-room (where the chief engineer stood to the engines) to reverse one engine, was as promptly obeyed, and the little craft spun round like a *teetotum*. If I had not seen it, I could never have believed it possible that a vessel would have turned so rapidly, and (although, perhaps, it is irrelevant to my subject) I cannot refrain from bearing testimony to the wonderful powers of turning that are given to a vessel by the application of Symond's turnscrews, as he loves to call them. On this occasion £50,000 of property was saved to its owners. I do not believe the cruiser saw us at all, and so very important to us was the fact that we had turned in so short a space, that I scarcely think we lost five yards of our position. Having turned we stopped to reconnoitre, and could still see the faint outline of the cruiser crawling (propelled, probably, only by the wind) slowly into the darkness, leaving the way open to us, of which we at once took advantage. It was now about one o'clock in the morning; our lead, and an observation of a friendly star, told us that we were rapidly nearing the shore. But it was so fearfully dark, that it seemed almost hopeless ever to find our way to the entrance of the river, and no one felt comfortable. Still we steamed slowly on and shortly made out a small glimmer of a light right ahead. We eased steam a little, and cautiously approached.

As we got nearer, we could make out the outline of a vessel lying at anchor, head to wind, and conjectured that this must be the senior officer's vessel, which we were told generally lay about two miles and a half from the river's mouth, and which was obliged to show some sort of light to the cruisers that were constantly under weigh right and left of her. The plan of finding out this light, and using it as a guide to the river's entrance, being shortly after this time discovered, the vessel that carried it was moved into a different position every night, whereby several blockade-runners came to grief.



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Feeling pretty confident now of our position, we went on again at full speed, and made out clearly the line of blockaders lying to the right and left of the ship which showed the light; all excepting her being apparently under weigh. Seeing an opening between the vessel at anchor and the one on her left, we made a dash, and, thanks to our disguise and great speed, got through without being seen, and made the most of our way towards the land. As a strong current runs close inshore which is constantly changing its course, and there were no lights or landmarks to guide us, it was a matter of great difficulty to find the very narrow entrance to the river.

We were now nearly out of danger from cruisers, who seldom ventured very close inshore in the vicinity of the batteries; and our pilot, who had been throughout the voyage in bodily fear of an American prison, began to wake up, and, after looking well round, told us that he could make out, over the long line of surf, a heap of sand called 'the mound,' which was a mark for going into the river.

This good news emboldened us to show a small light from the inshore side of the vessel; it was promptly answered by two lights being placed a short distance apart on the beach, in such a position that, when the two were brought into line, or, as the sailors call it, into one, the vessel would be in the channel which led into the river. This being done without interruption from the cruisers, we steamed in and anchored safely under the batteries of Fort Fisher.

Being now perfectly safe, lights were at once lit, supper and grog served out *ad libitum*, everybody congratulated everybody, and a feeling of comfort and jollity, such as can only be experienced after three nights' and three days' intense anxiety, possessed us all. On the morning breaking we counted twenty-five cruisers lying as near as they dared venture off the river's mouth, and a very pleasant sight it was, situated as we were. There was evidently a move among them of an unusual kind; for the smaller vessels were steaming in towards the shore on the north side, and the ships' launches, with guns in their bows, were pulling about from vessel to vessel. The cause of it as day advanced was but too apparent.

Just out of range of Fort Fisher's heavy artillery, on the north side of the river's entrance, a splendid paddle-wheel blockade-runner was lying on the beach, having been run on shore during the night to avoid capture.

Her crew had evidently escaped to the shore, and a smouldering smoke showed that she had been set fire to, and that a little wind was all that was necessary to make the flames break out. The blockading ships do not appear to have been aware of the damage they had done till daylight discovered the vessel, that they probably thought had either got into the river or escaped to sea, lying on the beach. However, they were not slow in making preparations for capturing her, if possible.



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Meanwhile, two of the crew of the blockade-runner managed to get on board of her, and setting her on fire in a dozen different places, everything in the vessel was soon destroyed, and her red-hot sides made boarding an impossibility.

So the gunboats retired out of range, and the artillery with the Whitworth guns returned to Fort Fisher. The shell of this vessel lay for months on the beach and was by no means a bad mark for the blockade-runners to steer by.

Having witnessed this little bit of excitement and received on board the crew of the stranded vessel, we took a pilot on board and steamed up the Cape Fear river to Wilmington.

It will be difficult to erase from my memory the excitement of the evening we made our little craft fast alongside the quay at Wilmington; the congratulations we received, the champagne cocktail we imbibed, the eagerness with which we gave and received news, the many questions we asked, such as, 'How long shall we be unloading?' 'Was our cargo of cotton ready?' 'How many bales could we carry?' 'How other blockade-runners had fared?' &c.; and the visits from thirsty and hungry Southerners of all ranks and denominations, many of whom had not tasted alcohol in any form for months, to whom whatever they liked to eat or drink was freely given, accompanied by congratulations on all sides. All these things, combined with the delightful feeling of security from capture, and the glorious prospect of a good night's rest in a four-poster, wound one up into an inexpressible state of jollity. If some of us had a little headache in the morning, surely it was small blame to us. Our host's cocktails, made of champagne bitters and pounded ice, soon put all things to rights; and after breakfast we lounged down to the quays on the river-side, which were piled mountains high with cotton-bales and tobacco tierces, and mixed in the lively and busy scene of discharging, selling, and shipping cargoes.

CHAPTER XI.

EXCITING ADVENTURES.

I may now, I trust, without appearing egotistical, digress slightly from the narrative to give an account of how I managed with my own private venture, which I had personally to attend to; for it is scarcely necessary to mention that in blockade-running everyone must look after himself. If he does not his labour will have been in vain.

Before leaving England I had met a Southern lady, who, on my inquiring as to what was most needed by her compatriots in the beleaguered States, replied curtly: 'Corsages, sir, I reckon.' So I determined to buy a lot of the articles she referred to, and on arriving at Glasgow (the port from which we originally started) I visited an emporium that seemed to contain everything in the world; and I astonished a young fellow behind the

counter by asking for a thousand pairs of stays. Such an unusual request sent him off like a rocket to higher authority, with

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whom I made a bargain for the article required at one shilling and a penny per pair, to be delivered the next day. At the same time I bought five hundred boxes of Cockle's pills, and a quantity of toothbrushes. Well, here I was in Wilmington, with all these valuables on my hands; the corsages were all right, but the horrid little Cockles were bursting their cerements and tumbling about my cabin in all directions. I was anxious, with the usual gallantry of my cloth, to supply the wants of the ladies first. The only specimens of the sex that I could see moving about were coloured women, who were so little encumbered with dress that I began to think I was mistaken in the article recommended by my lady friend as being the most required out here. After waiting some time, and no one coming to bid for my ware, I was meditating putting up on the ship's side a large board with the name of the article of ladies' dress written on it—a pillbox for a crest, and toothbrushes as supporters—when an individual came on board and inquired whether I wished 'to trade.' I greedily seized upon him, took him into my retreat, and made him swallow three glasses of brandy in succession, after which we commenced business.

I will not trouble my reader with the way in which we traded; regarding the corsages, suffice it to say that he bought them all at what seemed to me the enormous price of twelve shillings each, giving me a profit of nearly eleven hundred per cent.

On my asking where the fair wearers of the article he had bought could be seen, he told me that all the ladies had gone into the interior. I hope they found my importations useful; they certainly were not ornamental.

Elated as I was by my success, I did not forget the Cockles, and gently insinuated to my now somewhat excited friend that we might do a little more trading. To my disgust he told me that he had never heard of such a thing as Cockle's pills. I strongly urged him to try half-a-dozen, assuring him that if he once experienced their invigorating effects he would never cease to recommend them. But the ignorant fellow didn't seem to see it; for, finishing his brandy and buttoning up his pockets, he walked on shore. I never thought of naming toothbrushes, for what could a man who had never heard of Cockles know of the luxury of toothbrushes? So I sat quietly down, and began to sum up my profits on the *corsages*.

I was deeply engaged in this occupation when I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder. Turning round I saw my friend the trader, who, after having smothered my boot in tobacco-juice, said, 'I say, captain, have you got any coffin-screws on trade?' His question rather staggered me, but he explained that they had no possible way of making this necessary article in the Southern States, and that they positively could not keep the bodies quiet in their coffins without them, especially when being sent any distance for interment. As I had no acquaintance, I am happy to say, with the sort of

thing he wanted, it was agreed upon between us that I should send to England for a quantity, he, on his part, promising an enormous profit on their being delivered.

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I cannot help remarking on the very great inconvenience and distress that were entailed on the South through the want of almost every description of manufacture. The Southern States, having always been the producing portion of the Union, had trusted to the North, and to Europe for its manufactures. Thus, when they were shut out by land and by sea from the outer world, their raw material was of but little service to them. This fact tended, more than is generally believed, to weaken the Southern people in the glorious struggle they made for what they called and believed to be their rights,—a struggle, the horrors of which are only half understood by those who were not eye-witnesses of it. Whether the cause was good, whether armed secession was justifiable or not, is a matter regarding which opinions differ. But it is undeniable that all fought and endured in a manner worthy of a good and a just cause, and many were thoroughly and conscientiously convinced it was so. Such men as Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and others would never have joined any cause against their convictions; but it won't do for a blockade-runner to attempt to moralise. So to return to my story.

My readers will be desirous of knowing what was the result of my speculation in Cockles and toothbrushes. Regarding the former, I am sorry to say that all my endeavours to induce my Southern friends to try their efficacious powers were of no avail, so I determined to take them with me to Nassau (if I could get there), thinking that I might find a market at a place where everyone was bilious from over eating and drinking, on the strength of the fortunes they were making by blockade-running; and there I found an enterprising druggist who gave me two chests of lucifer matches in exchange for my Cockles, which matches I ultimately sold in the Confederacy at a very fair profit. My toothbrushes being not in the slightest degree appreciated at Wilmington, I sent them to Richmond, where they were sold at about seven times their cost.

So ended my speculation. The vessel's cargo consisted of blankets, shoes, Manchester goods of all sorts, and some mysterious cases marked 'hardware,' about which no one asked any questions, but which the military authorities took possession of. This cargo was landed, and preparations made for taking on board THE paying article in this trade, namely, cotton.

I never bought it in any quantity, but I know that the price in the Southern States averaged from twopence to threepence a pound, the price in Liverpool at that time being about half-a-crown.

We were anxious to try the luck of our run-out before the moon got powerful, so the cargo was shipped as quickly as possible. In the first place, the hold was stored by expert stevedores, the cotton-bales being so closely packed that a mouse could hardly find room to hide itself among them. The hatches were put on, and a tier of bales put fore and aft in every available spot on the deck, leaving openings



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for the approaches to the cabins, engine-room, and the men's forecandle; then another somewhat thinner tier on the top of that, after which a few bales for the captain and officers, those uncontrollable rascals whom the poor agents could not manage, and the cargo was complete. Loaded in this way, the vessel with only her foremast up, with her bow-funnel, and grey-painted sides, looked more like a huge bale of cotton with a stick placed upright at one end of it, than anything else I can think of. One bale for——, and still one more for—— (I never tell tales out of school), and all was ready.

We left the quay at Wilmington cheered by the hurrahs of our brother blockade-runners, who were taking in and discharging their cargoes, and steamed a short distance down the river, when we were boarded to be *searched* and *smoked*. This latter extraordinary proceeding, called for perhaps by the existing state of affairs, took me altogether aback. That a smoking apparatus should be applied to a cargo of cotton seemed almost astounding. But so it was ordered, the object being to search for runaways, and, strange to say, its efficacy was apparent, when, after an hour or more's application of the process (which was by no means a gentle one), an unfortunate wretch, crushed almost to death by the closeness of his hiding-place, poked with a long stick till his ribs must have been like touchwood, and smoked the colour of a backwood Indian, was dragged by the heels into the daylight, ignominiously put into irons, and hurled into the guard-boat. This discovery nearly caused the detention of the vessel on suspicion of our being the accomplices of the runaway; but after some deliberation, we were allowed to go on.

Having steamed down the river a distance of about twenty miles, we anchored at two o'clock in the afternoon near its mouth. We were hidden by Fort Fisher from the blockading squadron lying off the bar, there to remain till some time after nightfall. After anchoring we went on shore to take a peep at the enemy from the batteries. Its commandant, a fine, dashing young Confederate officer, who was a firm friend to blockade-runners, accompanied us round the fort. We counted twenty-five vessels under weigh; some of them occasionally ventured within range; but no sooner had one of them done so, than a shot was thrown so unpleasantly near that she at once moved out again.

We were much struck with the weakness of Fort Fisher, which, with a garrison of twelve hundred men, and only half finished, could have been easily taken at any time since the war began by a resolute body of five thousand men making a night attack. It is true that at the time of its capture it was somewhat stronger than at the time I visited it, but even then its garrison was comparatively small, and its defences unfinished. I fancy the bold front so long shown by its occupiers had much to do with the fact that such an attack was not attempted till just before the close of the war. The time chosen for our starting was eleven o'clock, at which hour the tide was at its highest on the bar at the entrance of the river. Fortunately the moon set about ten, and as it was very cloudy, we had

every reason to expect a pitch-dark night. There were two or three causes that made one rather more nervous on this occasion than when leaving Bermuda.



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In the first place, five minutes after we had crossed the bar, we should be in the thick of the blockaders, who always closed nearer in on the very dark nights. Secondly, our cargo of cotton was of more importance than the goods we had carried in; and thirdly, it *was the thing to do* to make the double trip in and out safely. There were also all manner of reports of the new plans that had been arranged by a zealous commodore lately sent from New York to catch us all. However, it was of no use canvassing these questions, so at a quarter to eleven we weighed anchor and steamed down to the entrance of the river.

Very faint lights, which could not be seen far at sea, were set on the beach in the same position as I have before described, having been thus placed for a vessel coming in; and bringing these astern in an exact line, that is the two into one, we knew that we were in the passage for going over the bar. The order was then given, 'Full speed ahead,' and we shot at a great speed out to sea.

Our troubles began almost immediately; for the cruisers had placed a rowing barge, which could not be seen by the forts, close to the entrance, to signalise the direction which any vessel that came out might take. This was done by rockets being thrown up by a designed plan from the barge. We had hardly cleared the bar when we saw this boat very near our bows, nicely placed to be run clean over, and as we were going about fourteen knots, her chance of escape would have been small had we been inclined to finish her. Changing the helm, which I did myself, a couple of spokes just took us clear. We passed so close that I could have dropped a biscuit into the boat with ease. I heard the crash of broken oars against our sides; not a word was spoken.

I strongly suspect every man in that boat held his breath till the great white avalanche of cotton, rushing by so unpleasantly near, had passed quite clear of her.

However, they seemed very soon to have recovered themselves, for a minute had scarcely passed before up went a rocket, which I thought a very ungrateful proceeding on their part. But they only did their duty, and perhaps they did not know how nearly they had escaped being made food for fishes. On the rocket being thrown up, a gun was fired uncommonly close to us, but as we did not hear any shot, it may have been only a signal to the cruisers to keep a sharp look-out.

We steered a mile or two near the coast, always edging a little to the eastward, and then shaped our course straight out to sea. Several guns were fired in the pitch-darkness very near us. (I am not quite sure whether some of the blockaders did not occasionally pepper each other.) After an hour's fast steaming, we felt moderately safe, and by the morning had a good offing.



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Daylight broke with thick, hazy weather, nothing being in sight. We went on all right till half-past eight o'clock, when the weather cleared up, and there was a large paddle-wheel cruiser (that we must have passed very near to in the thick weather) about six miles astern of us. The moment she saw us she gave chase. After running for a quarter of an hour it was evident that with our heavy cargo on board, the cruiser had the legs of us, and as there was a long day before us for the chase, things looked badly. We moved some cotton aft to immerse our screws well; but still the cruiser was steadily decreasing her distance from us, when an incident of a very curious nature favoured us for a time.

It is mentioned in the book of sailing directions, that the course of the Gulf Stream (in the vicinity of which we knew we were) is in calm weather and smooth water plainly marked out by a ripple on its inner and outer edges. We clearly saw, about a mile ahead of us, a remarkable ripple, which we rightly, as it turned out, conjectured was that referred to in the book. As soon as we had crossed it, we steered the usual course of the current of the Gulf Stream, that here ran from two to three miles an hour. Seeing us alter our course, the cruiser did the same; but she had *not* crossed the ripple on the edge of the stream, and the course she was now steering tended to keep her for some time from doing so. The result soon made it evident that the observations in the book were correct; for until she too crossed the ripple into the stream, we dropped her rapidly astern, whereby we increased our distance to at least seven miles.

It was now noon, from which time the enemy again began to close with us, and at five o'clock was not more than three miles distant. At six o'clock she opened a harmless fire with the Parrot gun in her bow, the shot falling far short of us. The sun set at a quarter to seven, by which time she had got so near that she managed to send two or three shots over us, and was steadily coming up.

Luckily, as night came on, the weather became very cloudy, and we were on the dark side of the moon, now setting in the West, which occasionally breaking through the clouds astern of the cruiser, showed us all her movements, while we must have been very difficult to make out, though certainly not more than a mile off. All this time she kept firing away, thinking, I suppose, that she would frighten us into stopping. If we had gone straight on, we should doubtless have been caught; so we altered our course two points to the eastward. After steaming a short distance we stopped quite still, blowing off steam under water, not a spark or the slightest smoke showing from the funnel; and we had the indescribable satisfaction of seeing our enemy steam past us, still firing ahead at some imaginary vessel.



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This had been a most exciting chase and a very narrow escape; night only saved us from a New York prison. All this hard running had made an awful hole in our coal-bunkers, and as it was necessary to keep a stock for a run off the blockaded Bahama Islands, we were obliged to reduce our expenditure to as small a quantity as possible. However we were well out to sea, and after having passed the line of cruisers between Wilmington and Bermuda, we had not much to fear till we approached the British possessions of Nassau and the adjacent islands, where two or three very fast American vessels were cruising, although five hundred miles from American waters. I am ignorant, I confess, of the laws of blockade, or indeed if a law there be that allows its enforcement, and penalties to be enacted, five hundred miles away from the ports blockaded. But it did seem strange that the men-of-war of a nation at peace with England should be allowed to cruise off her ports, to stop and examine trading vessels of all descriptions, to capture and send to New York, for adjudication, vessels on the mere suspicion of their being intended blockade-runners; and to chase and fire into real blockade-runners so near to the shore that on one occasion the shot and shell fell into a fishing village, and that within sight of an English man-of-war lying at anchor in the harbour at Nassau. Surely it is time that some well-understood laws should be made, and rules laid down, or such doings will sooner or later recoil on their authors.

Having so little coal on board, we determined on making for the nearest point of the Bahama Islands, and luckily reached a queer little island called Green Turtle Quay, on the extreme north of the group, where was a small English colony, without being seen by the cruisers. We had not been there long, however, before one of them came sweeping round the shore, and stopped unpleasantly near to us; even though we were inside the rock she hovered about outside, not a mile from us.

We were a tempting bait, but a considerable risk to snap, and I suppose the American captain could not quite make up his mind to capture a vessel (albeit a blockade-runner piled full of cotton) lying in an English port, insignificant though that port might be. We had got a large white English ensign hoisted on a pole, thereby showing the nationality of the rock, should the cruiser be inclined to question it. After many longing looks, she steamed slowly away, much to our satisfaction. Coals were sent to us from Nassau the next day, which having been taken on board, we weighed anchor, keeping close to the reefs and islands all the way. We steamed towards that port, and arrived safely, having made the in-and-out voyage, including the time in unloading and loading at Wilmington, in sixteen days.



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To attempt to describe at length the state of things at this usually tranquil and unfrequented little spot is beyond my powers. I will only mention some of its most striking features. Nassau differed much from Wilmington, inasmuch as at the latter place there was a considerable amount of poverty and distress, and men's minds were weighted with many troubles and anxieties; whereas, at Nassau, everything at the time I speak of was *couleur de rose*. Every one seemed prosperous and happy. You met with calculating, far-seeing men who were steadily employed in feathering their nests, let the war in America end as it might; others who, in the height of their enthusiasm for the Southern cause, put their last farthing into Confederate securities, anticipating enormous profits; some men, careless and thoughtless, living for the hour, were spending their dollars as fast as they made them, forgetting that they would 'never see the like again.' There were rollicking captains and officers of blockade-runners, and drunken swaggering crews; sharpers looking out for victims; Yankee spies; and insolent worthless *free niggers*—all these combined made a most heterogeneous, though interesting, crowd.

The inhabitants of Nassau, who, until the period of blockade-running, had, with some exceptions, subsisted on a precarious and somewhat questionable livelihood gained by wrecking, had their heads as much turned as the rest of the world. Living was exorbitantly dear, as can be well imagined, when the captain of a blockade-runner could realise in a month a sum as large as the Governor's salary. The expense of living was so great that the officers of the West India regiment quartered here had to apply for special allowance, and I believe their application was successful. The hotel, a large building, hitherto a most ruinous speculation, began to realise enormous profits. In fact, the almighty dollar was spent as freely as the humble cent had been before this golden era in the annals of Nassau.

As we had to stay here till the time for the dark nights came round again, we took it easy, and thoroughly enjoyed all the novelty of the scene. Most liberal entertainment was provided free by our owner's agent, and altogether we found Nassau very jolly: so much so, that we felt almost sorry when 'time' was called, and we had to prepare for another run. In fact, it was pleasanter in blockade-running to look backwards than forwards, especially if one had been so far in good luck.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISIT TO CHARLESTON.

All being ready, we steamed out of Nassau harbour, and were soon again in perilous waters. We had a distant chase now and then—a mere child's play to us after our experience—and on the third evening of our voyage we were pretty well placed for making a run through the blockading squadron as soon as it was dark. As the moon

rose at twelve o'clock, it was very important that we should get into port before she threw a light upon the subject.



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Unfortunately, we were obliged to alter our course or stop so often to avoid cruisers that we ran our time too close; for, as we were getting near to the line of blockade, a splendid three-quarter-size moon rose, making everything as clear as day. Trying to pass through the line of vessels ahead with such a bright light shining would have been madness; in fact, it was dangerous to be moving about at all in such clear weather, so we steamed towards the land on the extreme left of the line of cruisers, and having made it out, went quite close inshore and anchored.

By lying as close as we dare to the beach, we must have had the appearance of forming part of the low sand-hills, which were about the height and colour of the vessel; the wood on their tops forming a background which hid the small amount of funnel and mast that showed above the decks. We must have been nearly invisible, for we had scarcely been an hour at anchor when a gun-boat came steaming along the shore very near to the beach; and while we were breathlessly watching her, hoping that she would go past, she dropped anchor alongside of us, a little outside where we were lying—so close that we not only heard every order that was given on board, but could almost make out the purport of the ordinary conversation of the people on her decks. A pistol shot would have easily reached us. Our position was most unpleasant, to say the least of it. We could not stay where we were, as it only wanted two hours to daybreak. If we had attempted to weigh anchor, we must have been heard doing so. However, we had sufficient steam at command to make a run for it. So, after waiting a little to allow the cruiser's fires to get low, we knocked the pin out of the shackle of the chain on deck, and easing the cable down into the water, went ahead with one engine and astern with the other, to turn our vessel round head to seaward.

Imagine our consternation when, as she turned, she struck the shore before coming half round (she had been lying with her head inshore, so now it was pointed along the beach, luckily in the right direction, *i.e.* lying from the cruiser). There was nothing left to us but to put on full speed, and if possible force her from the obstruction, which after two or three hard bumps we succeeded in doing.

After steaming quite close to the beach for a little way, we stopped to watch the gun-boat, which, after resting for an hour or so, weighed anchor and steamed along the beach in the opposite direction to the way we had been steering, and was soon out of sight. So we steamed a short distance inshore and anchored again. It would have been certain capture to have gone out to sea just before daybreak, so we made the little craft as invisible as possible, and remained all the next day, trusting to our luck not to be seen. And our luck favoured us; for, although we saw several cruisers at a distance, none noticed us, which seems almost miraculous.



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Thus passed Christmas Day, 1863, and an anxious day it was to all of us. We might have landed our cargo where we were lying, but it would have been landed in a dismal swamp, and we should have been obliged to go into Wilmington for our cargo of cotton.

When night closed in we weighed anchor and steamed to the entrance of the river, which, from our position being so well defined, we had no difficulty in making out. We received a broadside from a savage little gun-boat quite close inshore, her shot passing over us, and that was all. We got comfortably to the anchorage about half-past eleven o'clock, and so ended our second journey in.

I determined this time to have a look at Charleston, which was then undergoing a lengthened and destructive siege. So, after giving over my craft into the hands of the owner's representatives, who would unload and put her cargo of cotton on board, I took my place in the train and, after passing thirty-six of the most miserable hours in my life travelling the distance of one hundred and forty miles, I arrived at the capital of South Carolina, or rather near to that city—for the train, disgusted I suppose with itself, ran quietly off the line about two miles from the station into a meadow. The passengers seemed perfectly contented, and shouldering their baggage walked off into the town. I mechanically followed with my portmanteau, and in due course arrived at the only hotel, where I was informed I might have half a room.

Acting on a hint I received from a black waiter that food was being devoured in the coffee-room, and that if I did not look out for myself I should have to do without that essential article for the rest of the day, I hurried into the *salle-a-manger*, where two long tables were furnished with all the luxuries then to be obtained in Charleston, which luxuries consisted of lumps of meat supposed to be beef, boiled Indian corn, and I think there were the remains of a feathered biped or two, to partake of which I was evidently too late. All these washed down with water, or coffee without sugar, were not very tempting; but human nature must be supported, so to it I set, and having swallowed a sufficient quantity of animal food, I went off to my room to take a pull at a bottle of brandy which I had sagaciously stored in my carpet-bag. But, alas! for the morals of the beleaguered city. I found, on arriving there, a nigger extended at full length in happy oblivion on the floor, with the few clothes I had with me forming his pillow, and the brandy bottle rolling about alongside of him, empty.

I first of all hammered his head against the floor, but the floor had the worst of it; then I kicked his shins (the only vulnerable part of a nigger), but it was of no use; so pouring the contents of a water jug over him, in the hope that I might thus cause awful dreams to disturb his slumbers, I left him, voting myself a muff for leaving the key in my box.

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Having letters of introduction to some of General Beauregard's staff, I made my way to headquarters, where I met with the greatest courtesy and kindness. An orderly was sent with me to show me the top of the tower, a position that commanded a famous view of the besieging army, the blockading squadron, and all the defences of the place. A battery had just been placed by the enemy (consisting of five Parrot guns of heavy calibre) five miles from the town, and that day had opened fire for the first time. At that enormous range the shell occasionally burst over or fell into the city, doing, however, little damage. The elevation of the guns must have been unusually great. I am told that every one of them burst after a week's, or thereabouts, firing. Poor Fort Sumter was nearly silenced after many months' hammering, but its brave defenders remained in it to the last, and it was not till a few days before Charleston was abandoned that they gave it up. At the time I speak of the whole of the western beach was in the hands of the enemy, Battery Wagner having succumbed after one of the most gallant defences on record. While it remained in the hands of the Southerners it assisted Fort Sumter, inasmuch as from its position it kept the enemy at a distance, but after its capture, or rather destruction, the latter fort was exposed to a tremendous fire from ships and batteries, and its solid front was terribly crumbled.

Surrounded, however, with water as it was, it would have been most difficult to take by assault; and from what I could learn, certain destruction would have met any body of men who had attempted it latterly. There it stood, sulkily firing a shot or shell now and then, more out of defiance than anything else. The blockading, or rather bombarding, squadron was lying pretty near to it on the western side of the entrance to the harbour; but on the east side, formidable batteries belonging to the Southerners kept them at a respectable distance. Blockade-running into Charleston was quite at an end at the time I am writing about. Not that I think the cruisers could have kept vessels from getting in, but for the reason that the harbour was a perfect network of torpedoes and infernal machines (the passage through which was only known to a few persons), placed by the Southerners to prevent the Northern fleet from approaching the city.

Having had a good look at the positions of the attacking and defending parties, I went down from the tower and paid a visit to a battery where two Blakely guns of heavy calibre, that had lately been run through the blockade in the well-known 'Sumter' (now the 'Gibraltar'), were mounted. These guns threw a shot of 720 lbs. weight, and were certainly masterpieces of design and execution. Unhappily, proper instructions for loading had not accompanied them from England, and on the occasion of the first round being fired from one of them, the gun not being properly loaded, cracked at the breech,



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and was rendered useless; the other, however, did good service, throwing shot with accuracy at great distances. I saw much that was interesting here, but more able pens than mine have already described fully the details of that long siege, where on one hand all modern appliances of war that ingenuity could conceive or money purchase were put into the hands of brave and determined soldiers; on the other hand were bad arms, bad powder, bad provisions, bad everything; desperate courage and unheard-of self-denial being all the Southerners had to depend upon.

These poor Southerners never began to open their eyes to the hopelessness of their cause till Sherman's almost unopposed march showed the weakness of the whole country. Even strangers like myself were so carried away with the enthusiasm of the moment, that we shut our eyes to what should have been clearly manifest to us. We could not believe that men who were fighting and enduring as these men were could ever be beaten. Some of their leaders must have foreseen that the catastrophe was coming months before it occurred; but, if they did so, they were afraid to make their opinion public.

On returning to the hotel, I found it full of people of all classes indulging in tobacco (the only solace left them) in every form. It is all very well to say that smoking is a vile habit; so it may be, when indulged in by luxurious fellows who eat and drink their fill every day, and are rarely without a cigar or pipe in their mouths; it may, perhaps, be justly said that such men abuse the use of the glorious narcotic supplied by Providence for men's consolation under difficulties. But when a man has hard mental and bodily work, and barely enough food to support nature, water being his only drink, then give him tobacco, and he will thoroughly appreciate it. Besides, it will do him real good. I think that at any time its use in moderation is harmless and often beneficial, but under the circumstances I speak of it is a luxury without price.

During the evening I met at the hotel a Confederate naval officer who was going to attempt that night to carry havoc among the blockading squadron by means of a cigar-shaped vessel of a very curious description.

This vessel was a screw steamer of sixty feet in length, with eight feet beam. She lay, before being prepared for the important service on which she was going, with about two feet of her hull showing above the water, at each end of which, on the shoulder as it were of the cigar, was a small hatch or opening, just large enough to allow a man to pop through it: from her bows projected a long iron outrigger, at the end of which there was fixed a torpedo that would explode on coming into contact with a vessel's side.

When the crew were on board, and had gone down into the vessel through one of the hatches above mentioned, the said hatches were firmly closed, and by arrangements that were made from the inside the vessel was sunk about six inches below the water,

leaving merely a small portion of the funnel showing. Steam and smoke being got rid of below water, the vessel was invisible, torpedo and all being immersed.



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The officer having thus described his vessel, wished me good-night, and started on his perilous enterprise. I met him again next evening quietly smoking his pipe. I eagerly asked him what he had done, when he told me with the greatest *sang-froid* that he had gone on board his vessel with a crew of seven men; that everything for a time had gone like clockwork; they were all snug below with hatches closed, the vessel was sunk to the required depth, and was steadily steaming down the harbour, apparently perfectly water-tight, when suddenly the sea broke through the foremost hatch and she went to the bottom immediately. He said he did not know how he escaped. He imagined that after the vessel had filled he had managed to escape through the aperture by which the water got in; all the rest of the poor fellows were drowned. Not that my friend seemed to think anything of that, for human life was very little thought of in those times. This vessel was afterwards got up, when the bodies of her crew were still in her hold. I imagined that the vessel contained sufficient air to enable her to remain under water two or three hours, or maybe some method was practised by which air could be introduced by the funnel; at all events, had she been successful on that night, she would undoubtedly have caused a good deal of damage and loss to the blockading squadron, who were constantly harassed by all sorts of infernal machines, torpedoes, fire-vessels, &c., which were sent out against them by ingenious Southerners, whose fertile imaginations were constantly conceiving some new invention.

On the next occasion that same enterprising officer was employed on a similar enterprise, his efforts were crowned with complete success.

He started one dark night, in a submerged vessel of the same kind as that above described, and exploded the torpedo against the bows of one of the blockading squadron, doing so much damage that the vessel had to be run on shore to prevent her sinking.

I must, before finishing my account of what I saw and did in Charleston, mention a circumstance that showed how little the laws of *meum* and *tuum* are respected during war times. The morning before I left, I had a fancy for having my coat brushed and my shoes polished. So having deposited these articles on a chair at the door of my room, I went to bed again to have another snooze, hoping to find them cleaned when I awoke. After an hour or so I got up to dress, and rang the bell several times without getting any answer. So I opened the door and looked out into the passage. To my surprise I saw an individual sitting on the chair on which I had put my clothes, trying on one of my boots. He had succeeded in getting it half on when it had stuck, and at the time I discovered him he seemed to be in a fix, inasmuch as he could neither get the boot off nor on. He was struggling violently with my poor boot, as if it were his personal enemy, and



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swearing like a trooper. Not wishing to increase his ire, I blandly insinuated that the boots were mine, on which he turned his wrath towards me, making most unpleasant remarks, which he wound up by saying that in these times anything that a man could pick up lying about was his lawful property, and that he was astonished at my impudence in asking for the boots. However, as the darned things would not fit him 'no how,' he guessed I was welcome to them; and giving a vicious tug to the boot to get it off, he succeeded in doing so, and I, picking it up with its fellow, made good my retreat. But where was my coat? I could not get an echo of an answer, where? So I went downstairs and told my piteous tale to the landlord, who laughed at my troubles, and told me he could not give me the slightest hopes of ever seeing it again; but he offered to lend me a garment in which to travel to Wilmington, which offer I gladly accepted.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEVER CAUGHT!

On my return to Wilmington I found that my vessel was ready for sea, so I took charge of her, and we went down the river.

We had to undergo the same ordeal as before in the way of being smoked and searched. This time there were no runaways discovered, but there was one on board for all that, who made his appearance, almost squashed to death, after we had been twenty-four hours at sea. We then anchored under Fort Fisher, where we waited until it was dark, after which, when the tide was high enough on the bar, we made a move and were soon rushing out to sea at full speed. There was a considerable swell running, which we always considered a point in our favour. By the way, writing of swells puts me in mind of a certain 'swell' I had on board as passenger on this occasion, who, while in Wilmington, had been talking very big about 'hunting,' which probably he supposed I knew nothing about. He used to give us long narratives of his own exploits in the hunting-field, and expatiated on the excitement of flying over ditches and hedges, while apparently he looked upon blockade-running and its petty risks with sublime contempt. Soon after we crossed the bar on our way out a gentle breeze and swell began to lift the vessel up and down, and this motion he described as 'very like hunting.'

Just after he had ventured this remark, a Yankee gun-boat favoured us with a broadside and made a dash to cut us off. This part of the fun, however, my friend did not seem to think at all 'like hunting,' and after having strongly urged me to return to the anchorage under the protecting guns of the fort, he disappeared below, and never talked, to me at least, about hunting again.



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But to return to my story, there was, as I said before, a considerable swell running outside, which was fortunate for us, as we ran almost into a gunboat lying watching unusually close to the bar. It would have been useless to turn round and endeavour to escape by going back, as, if we had done so, we should inevitably have been driven on to the beach, and either captured or destroyed. In such a predicament there was nothing for it but to make a dash past and take the gun-boat's fire and its consequences. I knew we had the legs of her, and therefore felt more at ease in thus running the gauntlet than I otherwise should have done, so on we went at full speed. She fired her broadside at about fifty yards distance, but the shot all passed over us, except one that went through our funnel. The marines on board of her kept up a heavy fire of musketry as long as we were visible, but only slightly wounded one of our men. Rockets were then thrown up as signals to her consorts, two of which came down on us, but luckily made a bad guess at our position, and closed with us on our quarter instead of our bow. They also opened fire, but did us no injury. At the moment there was no vessel in sight ahead; and as we were going at a splendid pace, we soon reduced our dangerous companions to three or four shadowy forms struggling astern without a hope of catching us. The signalling and firing had, however, brought several other blockaders down to dispute our passage, and we found ourselves at one moment with a cruiser on each side within a pistol shot of us; our position being that of the meat in a sandwich. So near were the cruisers, that they seemed afraid to fire from the danger of hitting each other, and, thanks to our superior speed, we shot ahead and left them without their having fired a shot.

Considering the heavy swell that was running, there was the merest chance of their hitting us; in fact, to take a blockade-runner in the night, when there was a heavy swell or wind, if she did not choose to give in, was next to impossible. To run her down required the cruiser to have much superior speed, and was a dangerous game to play, for vessels have been known to go down themselves while acting that part.

Then, again, it must be borne in mind that the blockade-runner had always full speed at command, her steam being at all times well up and every one on board on the look-out; whereas the man-of-war must be steaming with some degree of economy and ease, and her look-out men had not the excitement to keep them always on the *qui vive* that we had.



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I consider that the only chances the blockading squadron had of capturing a blockade-runner were in the following instances; *viz.*, in a fair chase in daylight, when superior speed would tell, or chasing her on shore, or driving her in so near the beach that her crew were driven to set fire to her and make their escape; in which case a prize might be made, though perhaps of no great value; or frightening a vessel by guns and rockets during the night into giving up. Some of the blockade-runners showed great pluck, and stood a lot of pitching into. About sixty-six vessels left England and New York to run the blockade during the four years' war, of which more than forty were destroyed by their own crews or captured; but most of them made several runs before they came to grief, and in so doing paid well for their owners.

I once left Bermuda, shortly before the end of the war, in company with four others, and was the only fortunate vessel of the lot. Of the other four, three were run on shore and destroyed by their own crews, and one was fairly run down at sea and captured.

I saw an extraordinarily plucky thing done on one occasion, which I cannot refrain from narrating. We had made a successful run through the blockade, and were lying under Fort Fisher, when as daylight broke we heard a heavy firing, and as it got lighter we saw a blockade-runner surrounded by the cruisers. Her case seemed hopeless, but on she came for the entrance, hunted like a rabbit by no end of vessels. The guns of the fort were at once manned, ready to protect her as soon as her pursuers should come within range. Every effort was made to cut her off from the entrance of the river, and how it was she was not sunk I cannot tell. As she came on we could see N——, her commander, a well-known successful blockade-runner, standing on her paddle-box with his hat off, as if paying proper respect to the men-of-war. And now the fort opened fire at the chasing cruisers, from whom the blockade-runner was crawling, being by this time well inshore. One vessel was evidently struck, as she dropped out of range very suddenly. On came the 'Old J——,' one of the fastest boats in the trade, and anchored all right; two or three shots in her hull, but no hurt. Didn't we cheer her! the reason of her being in the position in which we saw her at daylight was that she had run the time rather short, and daylight broke before she could get into the river; so that, instead of being there, she was in the very centre of the blockading fleet. Many men would have given in, but old N—— was made of different stuff.

We got well clear of the cruisers before daybreak, and keeping far out to sea, were unmolested during the run to Nassau, where we arrived safely with our second cargo of cotton, having this time been eighteen days making the round trip.

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Having made two round trips, we could afford to take it easy for a short time, and as the dark nights would not come on for three weeks, we gave the little craft a thorough refit, hauling her up on a patent slip that an adventurous American had laid down especially for blockade-runners, and for the use of which we had to pay a price which would have astonished some of our large ship-owners. I may mention that blockade-runners always lived well; may be acting on the principle that 'good people are scarce'; so we kept a famous table and drank the best of wine. An English man-of-war was lying in the harbour, whose officers frequently condescended to visit us, and whose mouths watered at what they saw and heard of the profits and pleasures of blockade-running. Indeed, putting on one side the sordid motives which I dare say to a certain extent actuated us, there was a thrilling and glorious excitement about the work, which would have well suited some of these gay young fellows.

Time again came round too soon, and we had to start on another trip, and to tear ourselves away from all sorts of amusements, some of us from domestic ties: for there were instances of anxious wives who, having followed their husbands to the West Indies, vastly enjoyed all the novelty of the scene. These ladies had their pet ships, in whose captains they had confidence, and in which they sent private ventures into the Confederacy; and in this way some of them made a nice little addition to their pin-money. I don't know that any of them speculated in Cockle's pills or corsages, but I heard of one lady who sent in a large quantity of yellow soap, and made an enormous profit out of her venture.

Having completed the necessary alterations and repairs, and made all snug for a fresh run, we started again from the port of Nassau. We had scarcely steamed along the coast forty miles from the mouth of the harbour, when we discovered a steamer bearing down on us, and we soon made her out to be a well-known, very fast Yankee cruiser, of whom we were all terribly afraid. As we were still in British waters, skirting the shore of the Bahamas, I determined not to change my course, but kept steadily on, always within a mile of the shore. On the man-of-war firing a shot across our bows as a signal for us to heave to, I hoisted the English colours and anchored. An American officer came on board, who, seeing unmistakable proofs of the occupation we were engaged in, seemed very much inclined to make a prize of us; but on my informing him that I claimed exemption from capture on the ground of the vessel being in British waters, he, after due consideration, sulkily wished me good morning and went back to his ship. She continued to watch us till the middle of the night, when I imagine something else attracted her attention, and she steamed away. We, taking advantage of her temporary absence, weighed our anchor and were soon far out at sea.



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At the end of three days we had run into a position about sixty miles from Wilmington without any incident happening worth mentioning. On our nearing the blockading squadron at nightfall we heard a great deal of firing going on inshore, which we conjectured (rightly as it afterwards appeared) was caused by the American ships, who were chasing and severely handling a blockade-runner. An idea at once struck me, which I quickly put into execution. We steamed in as fast as we could, and soon made out a vessel ahead that was hurrying in to help her consorts to capture or destroy the contraband. We kept close astern of her, and in this position followed the cruiser several miles. She made signals continually by flashing different coloured lights rapidly from the paddle-boxes, the meaning of which I tried my best to make out, so that I might be able to avail myself of the knowledge of the blockade signals at some future time; but I could not manage to make head or tail of them.

Suddenly the firing ceased, and our pioneer turned out to sea again. As we were by this time very near inshore, we stopped the engines and remained quite still, but unluckily could not make out our exact position.

The blockading cruisers were evidently very close in, so we did not like moving about; besides, the pilot was confident that we were close enough to the entrance of the river to enable us to run in when day broke, without being in any danger from the enemy.

Thus for the remainder of the night we lay quite close to the beach. Unfortunately, however, about an hour before daylight we struck the shore, and all our efforts to free the vessel were of no avail.

As the day dawned we found that we were about a mile from Fort Fisher, and that two of the American vessels nearest the shore were about a mile from us when we first made them out, and were steaming to seaward, having probably been lying pretty near to the river's mouth during the darkness of the night. They were not slow to make us out in our unhappy position. I ordered the boats to be lowered, and gave every one on board the option of leaving the vessel, as it seemed evident that we were doomed to be a bone of contention between the fort and the blockaders. All hands, however, stuck to the ship, and we set to work to lighten her as much as possible. Steam being got up to the highest pressure, the engines worked famously, but she would not move, and I feared the sand would get into the bilges. And now a confounded vessel deliberately tried the range with her Parrot gun, and the shot splashed alongside of us. Her fire, however, was promptly replied to by Fort Fisher. The shot from the fort's heavy artillery passed right over and close to the cruiser, and made her move further out, and thus spoiled the accuracy of the range of our devoted little craft, which the man-of-war had so correctly obtained. We made a frantic effort to get off our sandy bed, and on all hands running from one extremity of the vessel to the other, to our delight she slipped off into deep water.

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But our troubles were not yet over. To get into the river's mouth it was necessary to make a *detour*, to do which we had to steer out towards the blockading fleet for a quarter of a mile before we could turn to go into the river. While we were performing this somewhat ticklish manoeuvre, Fort Fisher most kindly opened a heavy fire from all its guns, and thus drew the attention of the blockaders from us. In twenty minutes from the time we got off we were safely at anchor under the Confederate batteries. The vessel that had been so hard chased and fired at during the night was lying safely at the anchorage, not very much damaged.

This was by far the most anxious time we had gone through. We had to thank the commandant and garrison of Fort Fisher for our escape. Having paid our gallant rescuers a visit, we took a pilot on board and steamed up to Wilmington. Cape Fear river at this time was full of all sorts of torpedoes and obstructions, put down to prevent any gun-boats from approaching the town of Wilmington, should the forts at its entrance be taken possession of by the enemy. And as the whereabouts of these obstructions were only known to certain pilots, we had to be careful to have the right man on board. We got up in safety, and finding that our cargo of cotton was ready, made haste to unload and prepare for sea again as quickly as possible.

There was nothing interesting in Wilmington, which is a large straggling town built on sand-hills. At the time I write of the respectable inhabitants were nearly all away from their homes, and the town was full of adventurers of all descriptions; some who came to sell cotton, others to buy at enormous prices European goods brought in by blockade-runners. These goods they took with them into the interior, and, adding a heavy percentage to the price, people who were forced to buy them paid most ruinous prices for the commonest necessaries of life.

On this occasion we spent a very short time at Wilmington, and having taken our cargo of cotton, we went down the river to the old waiting place under the friendly batteries of Fort Fisher. We had scarcely anchored when a heavy fog came on; as the tide for going over the bar did not suit till three o'clock in the morning, which I considered an awkward time, inasmuch as we should only have two hours of darkness left in which to get our offing from the land, I determined to go out in the fog and take my chance of the thick weather lasting. I calculated that if we had met with any cruisers, they would not have been expecting us, and so would have been under low steam.

I was told by every one that I was mad to venture out, and all sorts of prognostications were made that I should come to grief, in spite of which omens of disaster, however, I went over the bar at four o'clock in the afternoon in a fog, through which I could hardly see from one end of the ship to the other, and took my chance. As we went on the fog seemed to get if possible still thicker, and through the night it was impossible for us to see anything or anything to see us.



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In the morning we had an offing of at least a hundred and twenty miles, and nothing was in sight. We made a most prosperous voyage, and arrived at Nassau safely in seventy-two hours, thus completing our third round trip.

CHAPTER XIV.

LAST DAYS ON THE 'D——N.'

As no vessel had succeeded since the blockade was established in getting into Savannah (a large and flourishing town in Georgia, situated a few miles up a navigable river of the same name), where there was a famous market for all sorts of goods, and where plenty of the finest sea-island cotton was stored ready for embarkation, and as the southern port pilots were of opinion that all that was required to ensure success was an effort to obtain it, I undertook to try if we could manage to get the 'D——n' in.

The principal difficulty we had to contend with was that the Northerners had possession of a large fortification called Pulaski, which, being situated at the entrance of the river, commanded the passage up to the town.

To pass this place in the night seemed easy work enough, as it would be hard for the sentry to make a vessel out disguised as we were; but to avoid the shoals and sand-banks at the river's mouth, in a pitch-dark night, seemed to me, after carefully studying the chart, to be a most difficult matter. This, however, was the pilot's business; all we captains had to do was to avoid dangers from the guns of ships and forts; or, if we could not avoid them, to stand being fired at.

The pilot we had engaged was full of confidence; so much so, that he refused to have any payment for his services until he had taken us in and out safely. I may as well mention that there were few if any blockading vessels off Savannah river, the Northerners having perfect confidence, I presume, in Fort Pulaski and the shoals which surrounded the entrance of the river being sufficient to prevent any attempt at blockade-running succeeding. The lights in the ship off Port Royal, a small harbour in the hands of the Northern Government, a few miles from the entrance to Savannah, were as bright as in the time of peace, and served as a capital guide to the river's mouth. After two days' run from Nassau we arrived without accident to within twenty miles of the low land through which the Savannah river runs, and at dark steered for the light-vessel lying off Port Royal. Having made it out, in fact steaming close up to it, we shaped our course for Fort Pulaski, using the light as a point of departure, the distance by the chart being twelve miles. We soon saw its outlines looming through the darkness ahead, and formidable though it looked, it caused me no anxiety, compared with the danger we seemed to be in from the shoalwater and breakers being all around us. However, the pilot who had charge of such matters seemed comfortable enough.



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So we went cautiously along, and in ten minutes would have been past danger, at all events from the batteries on the fort, when one of the severest storms I ever remember of wind and rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, came on, and enveloped us in a most impenetrable darkness. Knowing that we were surrounded by most dangerous shoals, and being then in only fifteen feet water, I felt our position to be a very perilous one. The pilot had by this time pretty well lost his head; in fact, it would have puzzled anyone to say where we were. So we turned round and steered out to sea again, by the same way we had come in; and when we were as near as we could guess twenty miles from land, we let go our anchor in fifteen fathoms water.

Then came on a heavy gale of wind accompanied by a thick fog, which lasted three days and nights. I never in my life passed such an unpleasant time, rolling our gunnels under, knowing that we were drifting, our anchor having dragged, but in what direction it was difficult to judge; unable to cook, through the sea we had shipped having put our galley-fire out; and, worse than all, burning quantities of coal, as we had to keep steam always well up, ready for anything that might happen.

One day it cleared up for half an hour about noon, and we managed to get meridian observations, which showed us that we had drifted thirty miles of latitude, but we still remained in ignorance of our longitude. On the fourth day the gale moderated, the weather cleared up, and we ascertained our position correctly by observations.

When it was dark we steered for the light-vessel off Port Royal, meaning, as before, to make her our point of departure for the entrance of the river. But we went on and on, and we could not see the glimmer of a light or even anything of a vessel (we found out afterwards that the light-ship had been blown from her moorings in the gale). This was a nice mess. The pilot told us that to attempt to run for the entrance without having the bearings of the light to guide us would have been perfect madness. We had barely enough coals to take us back to Nassau, and if we had remained dodging about, waiting for the light-vessel to be replaced, we should have been worse off for fuel, of which we had so little that if we had been chased on our way back we should certainly have been captured.

So we started for Nassau, keeping well in shore on the Georgia and Florida coast. Along this coast there were many small creeks and rivers where blockade-running in small crafts, and even boats, was constantly carried on, and where the Northerners had stationed several brigs and schooners of war, who did the best they could to stop the traffic. Many an open boat has run over from the northernmost island of the Bahamas group, a distance of fifty miles, and returned with one or two bales of cotton, by which her crew were well remunerated.

We had little to fear from sailing men-of-war, as the weather was calm and fine, so we steamed a few miles from the shore, all day passing several of them, just out of range of their guns. One vessel tried the effect of a long shot, but we could afford to laugh at her.



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The last night we spent at sea was rather nervous work. We had reduced our coals to about three-quarters of a ton, and had to cross the Gulf Stream at the narrow part between the Florida coast and the Bahamas, a distance of twenty-eight miles, where the force of the current is four knots an hour. Our coals were soon finished. We cut up the available spars, oars, &c., burnt a hemp cable (that by the way made a capital blaze), and just managed to fetch across to the extreme western end of the group of islands belonging to Great Britain, where we anchored.

We couldn't have steamed three miles further. On the wild spot where we anchored there was fortunately a small heap of anthracite coal, that probably had been part of the cargo of some wreck, of which we took as much as would carry us to Nassau, and arrived there safely. Thus the attempt to get into Savannah was a failure. It was tried once afterwards by a steamer which managed to get well past the fort, but which stuck on a sand-bank shortly after doing so, and was captured in the morning.

It is not my intention to inflict on my readers any more anecdotes of my own doings in the 'D——n;' suffice it to say that I had the good luck to make six round trips in her, in and out of Wilmington, and that I gave her over to the chief officer and went home to England with my spoils. On arriving at Southampton, the first thing I saw in the 'Times' was a paragraph headed, 'The Capture of the "D——n."' Poor little craft! I learned afterwards how she was taken, which I will relate, and which will show that she died game.

The officer to whom I gave over charge was as fine a specimen of a seaman as well can be imagined, plucky, cool, and determined, and by the way he was a bit of a medico, as well as a sailor; for by his beneficial treatment of his patients we had very few complaints of sickness on board. As our small dispensary was close to my cabin, I used to hear the conversation that took place between C—— and his patients. I will repeat one.

C. 'Well, my man, what's the matter with you?'

Patient. 'Please, sir, I've got pains all over me.'

C. 'Oh, all over you, are they; that's bad.'

Then, during the pause, it was evident something was being mixed up, and I could hear C—— say: 'Here, take this, and come again in the evening.' (Exit patient.) Then C. said to himself: 'I don't think he'll come again; he has got two drops of the croton. Skulking rascal, pains all over him, eh!' I never heard the voice of that patient again; in fact, after a short time we had no cases of sickness on board. C—— explained to me that the only medicine he served out, as he called it, was *croton oil*; and that none of the crew came twice for treatment.

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Never having run through the blockade as the commander of a vessel (though he was with me all the time and had as much to do with our luck as I had), he was naturally very anxious to get safely through. There can be no doubt that the vessel had lost much of her speed, for she had been very hardly pushed on several occasions. This told sadly against her, as the result will show. On the third afternoon after leaving Nassau she was in a good position for attempting the run when night came on. She was moving stealthily about waiting for the evening, when suddenly, on the weather, which had been hitherto thick and hazy, clearing up, she saw a cruiser unpleasantly near to her, which bore down under steam and sail, and it soon became probable that the poor little 'D——n's' twin screws would not save her this time, well and often as they had done so before.

The cruiser, a large full-rigged corvette, was coming up hand over hand, carrying a strong breeze, and the days of the 'D——n' seemed numbered, when C—— tried a ruse worthy of any of the heroes of naval history.

The wind, as I said, was very fresh, with a good deal of sea running. On came the cruiser till the 'D——n' was almost under her bows, and shortened sail in fine style. The moment the men were in the rigging, going aloft to furl the sails, C—— put his plan into execution. He turned his craft head to wind, and steamed deliberately past the corvette at not fifty yards' distance. She, with great way on, went nearly a quarter of a mile before she could turn.

I have it from good authority that the order was not given to the marines on the man-of-war's poop to fire at the plucky little craft who had so fairly out-manoevred the cruiser, for out-manoevred she was to all intents and purposes. The two or three guns that had been cast loose during the chase had been partially secured, and left so while the men had gone aloft to furl the sails, so that not a shot was fired as she went past. Shortly after she had done so, however, the cruiser opened fire with her bow guns, but with the sea that was running it could do no harm, being without any top weights. The 'D——n' easily dropped the corvette with her heavy spars astern, and was soon far ahead; so much so that when night came on the cruiser was shut out of sight in the darkness.

After this the 'D——n' deserved to escape, but it was otherwise fated. The next morning when day broke she was within three miles of one of the new fast vessels, which had come out on her trial trip, flying light, alas! She had an opportunity of trying her speed advantageously to herself. She snapped up the poor 'D——n' in no time, and took her into the nearest port. I may mention that the 'D——n' and her captain were well known and much sought after by the American cruisers. The first remark that the officer made on coming aboard her was: 'Well, Captain Roberts, so we have caught you at last!' and he seemed much disappointed when he was told that



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the captain they so particularly wanted went home in the last mail. The corvette which had chased and been cheated by the 'D——n' the day before was lying in the port into which she was taken. Her captain, when he saw the prize, said: 'I must go on board and shake hands with the gallant fellow who commands that vessel!' and he did so, warmly complimenting C—— on the courage he had shown, thus proving that he could appreciate pluck, and that American naval men did not look down on blockade-running as a grievous sin, hard work as it gave them in trying to put a stop to it. They were sometimes a little severe on men who, after having been fairly caught in a chase at sea, wantonly destroyed their compasses, chronometers, &c., rather than let them fall into the hands of the cruiser's officers. I must say that I was always prepared, had I been caught, to have made the best of things, to have given the officers who came to take possession all that they had fairly gained by luck having declared on their side, and to have had a farewell glass of champagne with the new tenant at the late owner's expense. The treatment received by persons captured engaged in running the blockade differed very materially. If a *bona fide* American man-of-war of the old school made the capture, they were always treated with kindness by their captors. But there were among the officers of vessels picked up hurriedly and employed by the Government a very rough lot, who rejoiced in making their prisoners as uncomfortable as possible. They seemed to have only one good quality, and this was that there were among them many good freemasons, and frequently a prisoner found the advantage of having been initiated into the brotherhood.

The 'D——n's' crew fell into very good hands, and till they arrived at New York were comfortable enough; but the short time they spent in prison there, while the vessel was undergoing the mockery of a trial in the Admiralty Court, was far from pleasant. However, it did not last very long—not more than ten days; and as soon as they were free most of them went back to Nassau or Bermuda ready for more work. C—— came to England and told me all his troubles. Poor fellow! I am afraid his services were not half appreciated as they ought to have been, for success, in blockade-running as in everything else, is a virtue, whereas bad luck, even though accompanied with the pluck of a hero, is always more or less a crime not to be forgiven.

CHAPTER XV.

RICHMOND DURING THE SIEGE.

After the excitement of the last six or eight months I could not long rest in England, satisfied with the newspaper accounts of the goings on in the blockade-running world. So I got the command of a new and very fast paddle-wheel vessel, and went out again. The American Government had determined to do everything in its power to stop blockade-running, and had lately increased the force of blockaders on the southern



coast by some very fast vessels built at New York. Being aware of this, some of the first shipbuilders in England and Scotland were put, by persons engaged in blockade-running, on their mettle, to try and build steamers to beat them, and latterly it became almost a question of speed, especially in the daylight adventures, between blockaders and blockade-runners.



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Some of the vessels on this side of the water were constructed regardless of any good quality but speed, consequently their scantling was light, and their seagoing qualities very inferior. Many of them came to grief; two or three swamped at sea; others, after being out a few days, struggled back into Queenstown, the lamest of lame ducks; while some got out as far as Nassau quite unfit for any further work.

My vessel was one of the four built by R—— and G—— of Glasgow, and was just strong enough to stand the heavy cross sea in the Gulf Stream. She was wonderfully fast, and, taking her all in all, was a success. On one occasion I had a fair race in the open day with one of the best of the new vessels that the American Government had sent out to beat creation wherever she could meet it, and I fairly ran away from her.

On arriving at Wilmington in my new vessel I started to have a look at Richmond, which city was then besieged on its southern and eastern sides by General Grant, who, however, was held in check by Lee at Petersburg, a small town situated in an important position about eighteen miles from the capital. To get to Richmond was not easily accomplished without making a long *detour* into the interior (for which we had no time), for the outposts of the contending armies disputed possession of the last forty miles of the railroad between Wilmington and Petersburg, the latter town being on the line to Richmond. As telegraphic communication was stopped, it was a difficult matter to ascertain, day by day, whether a train could pass safely.

We had in our party the young General Custos Lee, a nephew of the Confederate commander-in-chief, on his way to his uncle's headquarters, who kindly offered his assistance in getting us through. When we arrived at a station some forty miles from Richmond we found, as we feared would be the case, our further progress by rail impracticable, but we got hold of a couple of waggons drawn by mules, into which we managed to stow ourselves and baggage the latter, by the way, being of considerable importance, as it contained several cases of drinkables, not to be obtained for love or money where we were going to. We travelled through all sorts of by-lanes, bumped almost to pieces for four miles, steering in the direction of the headquarters of the cavalry outposts, which were commanded by a celebrated raiding officer, also a nephew of the commander-in-chief. At last we found ourselves in a beautiful green valley surrounded by thick woods, where the general and his staff were quartered. He had with him two or three thousand cavalry, who, in spite of their bad clothing and somewhat hungry appearance, were as fine-looking a body of men as one would wish to see.

The general and his staff gave us a hearty welcome. Poor fellows, it was all they had to offer! We on our part produced sundry cases of sardines, Bologna sausages, and other tempting condiments wherewith to make a feast.



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The drink we mixed in two horse buckets cleaned up for the occasion; a dozen or so of claret, a couple of bottles of brandy, and half a dozen of soda water, the whole cooled with two or three lumps of ice (of which article, as if in mockery, the Southerners had heaps). All these good things were duly appreciated, not only by our new friends, who for months past had tasted nothing but coarse rye-bread and pork washed down with water, but also by well-shaken travellers like ourselves. Lying on the grass in that lovely spot, it seemed as if the war and all its horrors were for the moment forgotten. There were several Englishmen among the officers composing the staff, who had (they said) come out here to see active service, which they unquestionably had found to their hearts' content. They seemed the sort of men who would do credit to their country. I often wonder what has become of them; in one of them I was particularly interested. He said his name was Cavendish, but it may have been a *nom de guerre*.

While we were in the camp a picket came in, whose officer reported having had a skirmish with the enemy, in which the Northerners had been whipped. The way the cavalry outposts engaged with each other was curious enough. The ground they met on did not admit of cavalry charges being made, as thick underwood covered the country for miles round. So, when they were inclined for a brush, they dismounted, tied their horses to trees, and skirmished in very open lines, every man picking out his special enemy. When they had had enough of it, they picked up their killed and wounded, and, mounting their horses, rode away.

After passing four or five hours with our cavalry friends we bade them good-bye, and started (still accompanied by our valuable companion, the young general) on our way to the headquarters of the army, where we were to pass the night. It was well for us that we travelled in such good company, for having to pass all along the outskirts of the Southern army, we were constantly stopped and interrogated by patrols and pickets. Besides which we were sometimes disagreeably near to the outposts of the 'boys in blue,' as Grant's men were called. Having arrived very late in the evening at our destination, we bivouacked under the trees close to the headquarters of the general commanding, who was away at the front, and not expected back till the next evening. The rattle of musketry and the boom of heavy guns all through the night reminded us of our vicinity to the theatre of war, and somewhat disturbed our rest. But if we were a little nervous, we took care not to show it. In the morning we started in our waggons, and, after travelling a few miles across the country, came to the railway that connected the camp with Richmond. A train shortly afterwards picked us up and landed us at the capital of Virginia, where we took up our quarters at a comfortable-looking hotel. There was more to drink and eat here than at Charleston, consequently people had cheerful countenances. Liquor was, however, dear, brandy being sold at twenty-five shillings per bottle, it having to be run through the blockade. Here we found that the people had that wonderful blind confidence in the Southern cause which had mainly supported them through all difficulties.



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At this moment, though a line of earthworks hurriedly thrown up in a few hours at Petersburg was nearly all that kept Grant's well-organised army from entering the capital; though the necessaries of war, and even of life, were growing alarmingly short; though the soldiers were badly fed, and only half-clothed or protected from the inclemency of the weather (one blanket being all that was allowed to three men), still every one seemed satisfied that the South would somehow or other gain the day, and become an independent nation.

While in Richmond I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the talented correspondent of the 'Times,' who, although in a position to look on calmly at passing events, was so carried away by his admiration of the wonderful pluck shown by the Southerners, and by the general enthusiasm of the people among whom he lived, that he allowed himself to be buoyed up with the hope that something would eventually turn up in their favour, and in his letters never seemed to despair. Had he done otherwise he would have stood alone, so he swam with the tide; whereas all of us, especially those who were mere lookers-on, should have seen the end coming months before we were obliged to open our eyes to the fact that it was come. Through his acquaintance with the big-wigs, we managed to get a few of them to accept an invitation to a feed, as we could offer luxuries such as could not be found in Richmond.

Some of the first men in the Confederacy honoured us with their company, and made themselves uncommonly agreeable, seeming quite a jolly set of fellows. I fear that they have nearly all come to grief since then, except Mr. Benjamin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who before his death, which occurred several years after the time that I write, made himself a name in England worthy of his high talents and education.

I had the honour, while in Richmond, of being invited to a tea party by Mrs. Davis, the President's wife, which I thought very interesting. The ladies were all dressed in deep mourning; some (the greater part) for the sad reason that they had lost near and dear relatives in the wretched war; the others, I suppose, were in mourning for their country's misfortunes. Mrs. Davis moved about the room saying something civil to every one, while the President, though a stern-looking man who never smiled, tried to make himself agreeable to his guests, and gave one the idea of a thorough gentleman. I saw there military officers who had lately come from the front, surrounded by groups of people anxious for news; delegates from distant seceding States; messengers from Hood's army, about which many were beginning to be anxious; sympathising foreigners, government officials, and many others. The whole of the conversation naturally related to the prospects of the cause, and no one would have guessed from what he heard in President Davis's house that the end was so near.

I was anxious before my return to see something of the army that had so long defended Richmond. So I only remained a few days at the capital, after which I left it and its, alas! too confiding inhabitants, and made my way as best I could to the headquarters of the commander-in-chief. There I presented my letters of introduction to General Lee.



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It would perhaps be impertinence on my part to attempt to eulogise the character of this excellent man and good soldier, who, most thoroughly believing in the justice of the Southern cause, had sacrificed everything he possessed in its behalf, and had thrown all his energy and talent into the scale in its favour. Many who knew him well have done and will continue to do justice to his patriotism and self-denial. I had a very long conversation with him, which I wish I could repeat without being guilty of a breach of confidence, as evidence of the sensible notions he had formed of the state of affairs in the South. He was the only man I met during my travels who took a somewhat gloomy view of the military prospects of the country—of which, as a soldier, there could be no better judge.

After spending twenty-four hours in the camp, we went to the railway station to see if we could get places for Wilmington. We found that the line was in the hands of the Southerners, and that although the 'boys in blue' had a vulgar habit of firing into the carriages as they passed, the trains were running each night. But a train running and a non-combatant passenger getting a place in a carriage were widely different things, every available seat being taken up by sick and wounded soldiers. I made a frantic effort to get into the train somehow, and after a severe struggle succeeded in scrambling into a sort of horse-box and sat me down on a long deal box, which seemed rather a comfortable place to sleep on. It was pitch dark when I got into the train, and we were obliged to keep in the dark until we had run the gauntlet of the Northern pickets, who favoured us with a volley or two at a long range from the hills overlooking the railway. When we were clear of them I lighted a match, and to my horror found that I was comfortably lounging on a coffin. I wished I had not thrown a light on the subject, but by degrees, becoming accustomed I suppose to my position, I sank into a comfortable sleep and was really quite sorry when, on arriving at some station just before daylight, people came to remove my peculiar though far from uncomfortable couch. I felt its loss the more, for in its place they put a poor fellow wounded nearly to death, whose moans and cries were, beyond anything, distressing. We were a long time getting to Wilmington, as it was necessary to stop and repair most of the bridges on the line before the train could venture over them, an operation at which all passengers sound in wind and limb had to assist.

On arriving there we found all the world in a state of great excitement, on account of there having been a terrible fire among the cotton lying on the quays ready for embarkation, supposed to have been the work of an incendiary.

The recollections of my last proceedings in the blockade-running are far from pleasant, and I shall pass them over as briefly as possible.

When we had only the American Government cruisers to fear, we enjoyed the excitement in the same way as a man enjoys fox-hunting (only, by the way, we were the fox instead of the huntsmen), but when dire disease, in the worst form that Yellow Jack

could take, stalked in amongst us, and reduced our numbers almost hourly, things became too serious to be pleasant.

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However, before the fever showed itself we made one successful round trip in the new vessel (in and out) in capital form, having some exciting chases and little adventures, all very similar to what I have described before, the vessel doing credit to her designers on all occasions. We landed one thousand one hundred and forty bales of cotton at Bermuda, and it was after we had started from Wilmington on our second trip that the horrid yellow fever broke out among us. I believe that every precaution was taken by the Government of the island to prevent the disease from spreading, but increased by the drunkenness, dissipation, and dirty habits of the crews of the blockade-runners, and the wretchedly bad drainage of the town of St. George, it had lately broken out with great violence, and had spread like wildfire, both on the shore and among the shipping. It must have been brought on board our ship by some of the men, who had been spending much time on shore; we had not been twenty-four hours at sea before the fever had got deadly hold on our crew.

We went to Halifax, where we landed our sick and inhaled some purer air; but it was of no avail. The fever was in the vessel and we could not shake it off. The poor fellows as soon as we were out at sea again began to drop off. I never can forget an incident of that voyage, which, as it could only have happened during blockade-running times, I will mention, melancholy though it was. Two men died in the middle watch one night, when we were in very dangerous waters. Their bodies were wrapped in rough shrouds, ready to be committed to the deep when daylight broke, as we dared not show a light whereby to read the Funeral Service. I never waited so anxiously or thought the dawn so long in coming. I was waiting with my Prayer-book in my hands straining my eyes to make out the service; the men with their hats off, standing by the bodies, ready to ease them down into the sea. Our minds I fear wandered towards the danger that existed (almost to a certainty) of a cruiser making us out by the same light that enabled us to perform our sad office. However, as soon as there was light enough, the service was read without any indecent hurry, and fortunately nothing was in sight to disturb us for several hours afterwards.

It was miserable work. That morning about seven o'clock a man came up from the engine-room, and while trying to say something to me fell down in a fit, and was dead in half an hour. There was quite a panic among us all, and as if to make things worse to the superstitious sailors, whenever we stopped several horrid sharks immediately showed themselves swimming round the vessel. The men lost all heart, and would I think have been thankful to have been captured, as a means of escape from what they believed to be a doomed vessel. Taking into consideration that if we got into Wilmington we should, with this dreadful disease on board, have been put into almost interminable quarantine (for the inhabitants of Wilmington having been decimated before by yellow fever, which was introduced by blockade-runners, had instituted the most severe sanitary laws), I determined to go back to Halifax.



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On arriving there I was taken very ill with yellow fever, and on my recovery made up my mind to give up blockade-running for ever and all. The game indeed was fast drawing to a close. Its decline was caused in the first by the impolitic behaviour of the people at Wilmington, who, professedly acting under orders from the Confederate Government at Richmond, pressed the blockade-runners into their service to carry out cotton on Government account, in such an arbitrary manner that the profit to their owners, who had been put to an enormous expense and risk in sending vessels in, was so much reduced that the ventures hardly paid. And when at last Fort Fisher was taken, and thus all blockade-running entirely put an end to, the enterprise had lost much of its charm; for, unromantic as it may seem, much of that charm consisted in money-making.

However, I will mention one or two instances to show what the love of enterprise will lead men to do, and with these I will close my narration.

On the first night of the attack on Fort Fisher, which it may be remembered was a failure entirely through bad management, though its little garrison fought like lions, a blockade-runner unaware of what was going on, finding that the blockading squadron was very near inshore and hearing a great deal of firing, kept creeping nearer to the fort, till she was near enough to make out what they were doing. Judging rightly that they would never suspect that any attempt would be made to run the blockade at such a time, she joined a detachment of gun-boats and went deliberately in as one of them. When they, being repulsed, had steamed away, our friend remained at anchor under the fort, much to the astonishment of the garrison. It would have been rather awkward if the fort had been taken, but in such times no one looks very far ahead.

Another vessel went out from Wilmington the same night, and was unmolested. But fortune does not always favour the brave. Fort Fisher was at last taken *unbeknownst*, as the sailors say, to the blockade-runners at Nassau or Bermuda, at which places the blindest confidence was still felt in everything connected with the fortunes of the South, and where to whisper an opinion that any mishap might happen to Wilmington was positively dangerous. The crafty Northerners placed the lights for going over the bar as usual. The blockade-runners came cautiously on, and congratulating themselves at seeing no cruisers ran gaily into the port. The usual feasting and rejoicings were about to commence when a boat full of armed men came alongside, and astonished them by telling them that they were in the lion's mouth. This happened to four or five vessels before the news had reached the islands. It was hard lines, no doubt, but quite fair play. It was the blockaders' turn to laugh now.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAND BLOCKADE.



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I have now come to the end of my blockade-running yarns. I have endeavoured to avoid giving offence to anyone: to the American officers and men who manned the cruisers I can, as a nautical man, truly and honestly give the credit of having most zealously performed their hard and wearisome duty. It was not their fault that I did not visit New York at the Government's expense; but the old story that 'blockades, to be legal, must be efficient,' is a tale for bygone days. So long as batteries at the entrance of the port blockaded keep ships at a respectable distance, the blockade will be broken.

A practical suggestion that my experience during the time I was a witness of the war in America would lead me to make is, that, both for the purposes of war and of blockade, speed is the most important object to attain. Towards the end of that contest, blockade-running became much more difficult, in fact, was very nearly put a stop to, not by the ports becoming more effectually closed to traffic, but by the sea being literally covered with very fast vessels, who picked up many blockade-runners at sea during the daytime, especially when they had their heavy cargoes of cotton on board. The Americans are also perfectly alive to the fact that, for purposes of war, speed is all important. An American officer of rank once remarked to me: 'Give me a fifteen-knot wooden vessel armed with four heavy guns of long range, and I'll laugh at your lumbering iron-clads.' Perhaps he had prize-money in view when he said so; or, what is still more important, he may have felt how easily such vessels as those he proposed would sweep the seas of foreign privateers. In these views I can but think he was right and far-seeing. Time will show.

It may have struck my readers as strange that, in a country with so large an inland boundary, the necessaries of life and munitions of war could not have been introduced into the Southern States by their extensive frontiers: but it is only a just tribute to the wonderful energy shown by the Northern Americans during the civil war, to state that the blockade by land was as rigid as that enforced by their fleets; and almost as much risk was run by persons who broke the land blockade as by those who evaded the vigilance of the cruisers at sea. The courses of the large inland rivers were protected by gun-boats, and on account of the rapids and other impediments, such as snags, with which they were filled, the fords or passes for boats were few and far between, and thus easily guarded; besides which, it was always a difficult matter to avoid the pickets belonging to either party, who were very apt to suspect a man they found creeping about without any ostensible object, and anyone suspected of being a spy in those days had a short shrift and a long rope applied before he knew where he was. More from a spirit of enterprise than from any other reason, I determined to see what the land blockade was like, and while at Richmond, happening to meet another adventurous individual also so inclined, we commenced our plan of campaign.



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First of all (by the way, I ought to mention that we were both nautical parties) we engaged a pilot, thereby meaning a man who had a canoe or two stowed away in different parts of the woods, and who was well acquainted with the passes on the river. Our amiable friend, the correspondent of the 'Times.' showed so much confidence in our success that he entrusted to our care a packet of despatches, which were intended, if we got through successfully, to delight the eyes of the readers of the 'Thunderer' some weeks afterwards.

We had to buy a horse and buggy, as naturally enough no one would let them out on hire for such an enterprise; besides, those were not days when men let out anything on hire that they could not keep in sight. However, we sent a man on before us, in company with the pilot, to a station some miles from the frontier, whose business it was to bring the trap back when we had done with it. We stowed in our haversacks a pair of dry stockings, a good stock of tobacco, and a couple of bottles of brandy, against the road; we also had passes to produce in the event of questions being asked by the patrols on the Southern side of the frontier.

All being ready, we started, leaving Richmond at four o'clock in the morning. We travelled on a long, dreary, dusty road all day, stopping about noon for two hours at a free nigger's hut, where we got some yams and milk, and about sunset arrived at the station above mentioned, at which we were to dismiss our conveyance; and right glad we were to get rid of it, for we were bumped to death by its dreadful oscillations.

At this station our pilot was waiting for us. There were also bivouacking here a picket of cavalry, who told us they had seen some of the enemy's patrols that morning, scouring about on the opposite bank of the river just where we proposed to land. Somehow or other, people always seem to take a pleasure in telling you disagreeable things at a time when you rather want encouragement than fear instilled into you. We had some supper, consisting of eggs and bacon; and at nine o'clock, it being then pitch dark, the pilot informed us it was time to start. I must say I should have been more comfortable if I had been on the bridge of my little craft, just starting over the bar at Wilmington, with the probability of a broadside from a gun-boat saluting us in a very short time, than where I was. But it would never do to think of going back, so we crawled into the wood.

Our land pilot informed us that the bank of the river, from whence we should find a clear passage across, was about two miles distant. I never remember seeing or feeling anything to be compared with the darkness of that pine wood, but our guide seemed to have the eyes of a basilisk. We formed Indian file, our guide leading, and crept along as best we could. At last, after stealthily progressing for half an hour, a glimmer of starlight through the trees showed us that we were getting to the borders of the wood.



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A few minutes afterwards we were desired to lie down. Feeling helpless as babes, we passively obeyed, and watched our guide as he moved about like a spectre in the long grass on the banks of the Potomac, looking for his canoe. At last he returned and whispered that the boat was all right, and we all crept like serpents to where it was concealed. Nothing could be heard but the wind blowing through the trees, and the discordant noises of frogs and other denizens of the swamp. So dark was the night that we could hardly see fifty yards across the river. I suppose this was all in our favour; but how our guide knew the marks by which to steer was a puzzle to me, and as I never meant to profit by this experience I asked no questions.

Not a word was spoken as we (myself and my friend) launched the canoe silently into the water and seated ourselves, or rather obeyed orders and lay down, the pilot sitting in the stern, with his face towards the bows of the boat, having a light paddle in his hand, which he worked wonderfully well and silently. The distance across the river was about three miles.

We shot ahead at a rapid pace for about five minutes, when suddenly, bump went the canoe against something. To lie flat down was to our guide the work of a second, and the canoe was at once transformed into a floating log.

Well it was so, for it seems we had struck a small boat that was fastened astern of the gun-boat guarding the river. That the noise of the collision had been heard on board was evident, for a sentry hailed, 'Boat ahoy!' and fired his musket, and one of those detestable bright lights which the American men-of-war have a nasty habit of showing flashed over the water, making everything visible for a hundred yards round. The current of the river, however, was very strong, and I fancy we had drifted out of the radius covered by the light, as we were fortunately not discovered; or perhaps the diligent watchman on board the man-of-war thought some huge crocodile or other monster had come in contact with their boat. Be that as it may, we were safe, and twenty minutes more paddling brought us to land on the opposite bank of the river; but unfortunately our little adventure had thrown us out of our line, or as we sailors should have called it, out of our course. We hauled the canoe out of the water, and hid her in the long grass. All we could see around us was a dismal swamp, with the dark wood in the background. Our guide honestly told us that having been thrown out of his 'reckoning' in regard to our position, to move from where we were before daybreak would be madness, so we took a pull at the brandy bottle, lighted our pipes and waited patiently, having moved well in under cover of the long grass, so as to be out of sight of any vessel lying in the river near to us.



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When the day dawned, our pilot after having reconnoitred told us that we were very well placed for starting for Washington; but that it would be impossible, on account of the patrols that were constantly watching the river's banks, for us to move during the daytime, so we were doomed to remain all day in the damp grass. Luckily we had put in our pockets at last night's supper some black bread and an onion or two; so we made the best of things, and so did the sandflies. How they did pitch into us, especially into me! I suppose the good living I had been accustomed to on board the blockade-runner, or my natural disposition to good condition, made me taste sweet. Several times during that fearful day I was tempted to rush out from my hiding-place, and defying patrols, gun-boat's crew, and all authorities, make my escape from that place of torture.

Anyone who has experienced the necessity of remaining quiet under such an infliction as an attack of millions of sandflies on a hot sunny day will appreciate my feelings. About one o'clock we got as a diversion from our tormentors a great fright. A boat's crew of a gun-boat lying about a mile distant from our retreat landed, and out of sheer idleness set fire to the grass about a hundred yards from where we were lying concealed.

We heard the crackling of the grass and thought of leaving our concealment at the risk of discovery; but our guide wisely remarked that the wind was the wrong way to bring the fire towards our hiding-place, so we felt safe. The feeling of security was more pleasant, because we distinctly heard the men belonging to the gun-boat conversing with others, who clearly were patrols on the river's bank.

The evening at last closed in, and as soon as it was quite dark we moved on, and after struggling through a thick wood for half an hour, got on the high road to Washington. We travelled by night, meeting occasional patrols, whom we dodged by either lying down or getting behind trees till they had passed.

We concealed ourselves carefully during the day, and on the third morning before daylight we were within half a mile of the city. As we got near the bridge close outside Washington, we tried our best to look like the rest of the people who were going on their ordinary business; and though somewhat severely scrutinised by the guard we managed to pass muster, and got safely into Washington, footsore, hungry, and regularly done up.

We went to a small inn that had been recommended to us when we were in Richmond, where probably they had some Southern proclivities. No questions were asked as to where we came from, though, I take it, the people of the house had a shrewd guess. We found ourselves among friends and perfectly safe from meddling inquiries.

Thus the land blockade was run. I do not think much experience was gained by this particularly unpleasant exploit, which after all there was no very great difficulty in performing, and I certainly prefer my own element.



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After a short stay we made our way easily to New York, not feeling any anxiety from the fact of our being staunch Southerners in our opinions, inasmuch as there were numbers of sympathising friends wherever we went, more perhaps than the authorities were aware of. I stayed a few days in New York to recruit my strength after the fatigue of the journey, and saw all the sights and enjoyed all the pleasures of the most delightful city in the world, except perhaps Paris and London. I shall not attempt to give my readers any description of New York. This has already been done by abler pens than mine.

While in New York I was greatly struck with the calm confidence of the bulk of the Northerners in the ultimate success of their arms against the South. If I gained nothing else by running the land blockade, I at least got an insight into the enormous resources possessed by the North, and a knowledge of the unflinching determination with which the Federals were prepared to carry on the struggle to the end. I must confess that I left New York with my confidence that the Confederates would achieve their independence very much shaken.

Not being desirous of going through the risk and inconvenience of running the land blockade again, I returned to Nassau by steamer from New York.

CHAPTER XVII.

I ENTER THE TURKISH NAVY.

After superintending, as it were, the adventures just detailed, I found that there was still a year to pass before my time for service as a post-captain came on; so I determined on making a Continental tour to fill up the space. After wandering about in different countries, I more by accident than design visited Constantinople.

While there, I called upon that great statesman Fuad Pasha, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, to whom I presented my letters of introduction. He received me most cordially, and, during our conversation, mentioned that for some years Turkey had had to deal with a serious insurrection in the island of Crete, which it was found difficult to suppress, owing to the assistance from without which the revolutionary party received from Greece; also on account of the somewhat doubtful laws existing as to blockade-running. For, although Turkish men-of-war were continually on the look-out, vessels mostly under the Greek flag, carrying warlike stores, provisions, &c., evaded the watch of the cruisers on one pretext or another, and so managed to keep a lively communication with the insurrectionary subjects of the Sultan in Crete. Only one vessel had been captured *in flagrante delicto* after a sharp fight, and had been condemned as a lawful prize.

The Turkish authorities were told that, according to international law, a blockade-running vessel could not be followed more than ten miles from the coast, though having been



seen breaking the blockade, and that as soon as a blockade-runner was within four miles of any island not belonging to Turkey, she could not be touched, &c. &c.; in fact, laws were *fabricated* to defend the blockade-running, which fed the revolution to such an extent that, while it continued, it was hopeless to attempt to put down the revolt.



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I accidentally hinted to His Highness, Fuad Pasha, that I thought the blockade-running could be put a stop to without infringing any law, especially where laws were so elastic. He seemed much struck with my remark, and asked me to call on him again in a few days. Now I had merely mentioned casually what I thought. I had no idea of anything serious resulting from our interview. I was indeed surprised on my return to His Highness by his saying: 'I have consulted His Majesty the Sultan, who desires me to tell you that if you would wish to take service with the Ottoman Government, arrangements can be made whereby you can do so, only you must take the risk and responsibility of offending your own people.'

I had to consider a little before replying. I bore in mind that there were some two hundred and fifty post-captains in the English navy clamouring for employment, and that there were at the moment I speak of only about forty employed. I remembered that for twenty-four years an English officer of the same rank as myself had held the post now offered to me, namely, that of Naval Adviser to the Turkish Government, that the post was just vacant through the retirement of Sir Adolphus Slade (who had served honourably for twenty years, and had retired from old age). I calculated in those days of profound peace there was more probability of active service in the Eastern world than elsewhere. So I answered: 'Well, your Highness, I am ready if the terms offered me are satisfactory.'

I may say they proved most satisfactory; so, to make a long story short, I accepted and was booked as a Turkish employe for five years, always retaining my rank and position as an English naval officer, and my nationality as a British subject.

I found afterwards, as regards my position as an English naval officer, I had somewhat reckoned without my host. It seems that this post was considered by the English Admiralty as one of their choice gifts, and many were the applicants for it on Sir A. Slade's retirement, so much so that their lordships made great capital of this appointment, and were furious at my action in the matter. They said I had 'cut out' a good old servant to whom they had intended to give it. They suggested my coming home at once, &c. &c. I didn't see it in the same light as their lordships, and I signified my determination to remain where I was; for which, as will be seen, they paid me off in course of time. Luckily, I could afford by the arrangement I had made with the Turkish Government to be in the Admiralty's bad books, and even the frowns of the English Ambassador did not affect me a bit. I believe they called me 'adventurer,' 'artful dodger,' &c., but it must be remembered that I was in every way as much entitled to this position as the Admiralty 'pet,' whoever he may have been.

From the day of signing my contract (which has been constantly renewed) to the time I write, some sixteen years, I never have had cause to regret the step I took.



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Shortly after my installation as vice-admiral in the Turkish navy, it was decided that I should be sent to Crete to put a stop to the blockade-running. 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' as one of my, what may be called, unfriendly critics has written about me, and the remark was *ben trovato* at all events, for I certainly did know something about blockade-running.

I accordingly hoisted my flag in a fine fifty-gun wooden frigate, and arrived at Suda Bay, the principal port of Crete, where six or seven Turkish men-of-war were stationed, of which I took command. Here I heard all the naval officers had to say about the blockade, the impunity with which it was carried on, &c. I found, as I before mentioned, that the Turkish naval officers' hands were tied by all sorts of imaginary difficulties. They had most zealously done their duty while trying to stop the blockade-running. They had shown great pluck and endurance, but they always feared to break the law and so get the ever-bullied Turkish Government into trouble. Here I also heard of the triumphant manner in which the blockade-runners left the ports of Greece. How the Mayors of Syra, Poros, and other Greek towns, conducted, with flags flying, bands playing, and the hurrahs of the entire population, the hitherto triumphant blockade-running captains and crews to their ships, on the way to feed the flame of revolt against a nation with whom the Greeks professed to be on most friendly terms.

I heard all this, and was moreover told that if the blockade-running was stopped, the insurgents in Crete would at once lay down their arms for want of food and warlike stores.

I determined to stop it at all risks.

Picking out of my squadron a couple of fast despatch boats and a quick steaming corvette to accompany my flag-ship, I started on a cruise, and once out of sight of the harbour of Suda, steamed straight for Syra. Now this port had been the principal delinquent in fitting out and sending blockade-runners to Crete; so I thought that by going as it were to the starting-point, I should be somewhat nearer to my quarry than by waiting for them in Crete. Circumstances favoured me in the most marvellous manner. As morning broke the day after I left Suda, I was about eight miles from Syra harbour, steaming slowly, when I saw what made my heart leap into my mouth, *viz.*, a regular blockade-runner exactly of the type used in the American war, going at full speed for Syra harbour.

He was *outside* my little squadron, and must pass within a mile or so ahead to get to his port.



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A somewhat similar position I have so often seen, in fact, taken part in, of a craft running for dear life into Charleston or Wilmington, across the bows of blockading ships just at daylight. I saw that he was firing up all he knew, and was going at a tremendous speed. I signalled to my despatch boats to chase, and when my flag-ship was within about a mile and a half I fired a blank gun to make him show his colours. To this he replied by firing his long Armstrong gun with such effect that the shot cut away the stanchion of the bridge on which I was standing. Now, gallant fellow as he was, in doing this he was wrong; he should have shown his colours and run (if he knew he wasn't honest) for the shelter of a neutral flag, but not fired at a man-of-war, who in her duty as forming part of the police of the seas fires a blank gun asking for colours from a suspicious vessel. He undoubtedly committed an act of piracy and gave me a splendid hold on him.

My despatch boats chased the blockade-runner close to Syra harbour, both parties keeping up a warm running fight. When I recalled them, I found that this vessel was named the 'Enossis.' Her captain was a most courageous Greek, who thought of nothing but carrying his cargo and fighting to the last for his ship, evidently ignoring all laws, nor did he even think that on this occasion someone was acting against him who knew something of the rules of blockade, and who could have told him that an armed blockade-runner is a pirate, that is to say, if she uses her arms against a man-of-war.

I was so satisfied with what had occurred that I sent off one of my despatch boats to the Governor of Crete, telling him that he need not fear the blockade-runners any more, as they (the two others were lying in Syra harbour) had put themselves in so false a position that at all events for several weeks I could detain them at Syra. I knew that one week would suffice to stop the revolt in Crete, as without the blockade-runners the insurrectionists had positively nothing to eat.

(I may as well at once observe that I was perfectly justified in saying this, for within three days, no blockade-runner arriving at the island, the insurgents laid down their arms and *begged for bread*. And so ended the Cretan revolt.)

Having recalled the vessels I had sent to chase the 'Enossis' into Syra harbour, I steamed in the roads off that port, and anchored with three vessels.

I then sent to the authorities on shore at Syra, and demanded their assistance in arresting a vessel that had taken shelter in their port, which, as I stated in my despatch, had committed an act of piracy on the high seas, by firing at my flagship when the latter called upon her to show her colours by firing a blank gun. At the same time I informed the authorities of Syra that, as the companions of the 'Enossis' were in the harbour, I should allow none of them to go to sea until the question of that vessel's



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illegal action was cleared up. By doing this I took the wind out of the sails of the authorities of Syra. They of course were furious, and at once despatched a vessel to Athens for orders. At the same time they made a semblance of meeting my demand by stating that the 'Enossis' should be tried by international law. They also requested me to make my protest and to leave Syra, as the populace were in a state of excitement beyond their power of control. In this request all the Foreign Consuls joined.

I positively declined to leave; had I consented I am convinced the 'Enossis' and her companions would have left for Crete as soon as I was out of sight. In the meantime I sent a despatch boat to Smyrna with telegrams for Constantinople asking for assistance, stating my position. I remained off Syra with two ships, one being a despatch boat, watching the movements of the three blockade-runners, to whom I notified that I would sink them if they attempted to leave the port.

I often wonder they didn't make a rush for it on the first night of my arrival, when I was almost alone. The Greeks never want pluck. If they had done so, one vessel out of the three would certainly have escaped, taken food to the insurgents, and capsized all my calculations.

It merely corroborated my view of blockade-running peoples, namely, that they go for gain (some perhaps for love of enterprise); don't fight unless very hard pressed, and not always then if they are wise; that is what it should be. It is outrageous that adventurous persons not engaged in war should become belligerents, as well as carriers of arms and provisions to an enemy.

The first night I passed off Syra was one of great anxiety, as I had promised the Governor of Crete that no blockade-runner should go to the island.

In the morning a small steamer arrived from Athens with a Turkish official on board. He came to me pale as a sheet, and told me that as he left the Piraeus a Greek frigate was on the point of leaving for Syra, whose captain, officers, and crew had sworn to bring back Hobart Pasha dead or alive. Half an hour afterwards I got under weigh, and as I steamed about in the offing I saw the Greek frigate coming round the point.

It was a moment of intense excitement. The tops of the houses at Syra were covered with people. It looked like the old story of the 'Chesapeake' and 'Shannon,' where the people turned out to see the fine sport, and the band played, 'Yankee doodle dandy, oh!'

However, I steamed towards my supposed enemy, went almost alongside of him, expecting momentarily to receive his broadside, when to my astonishment and I must say satisfaction he steamed into the anchorage, and let go three anchors. This didn't look like fighting. I found afterwards that the Greek frigate had *no powder* on board. It

was a shame to put her captain in so false a position, as everyone knows what gallant stuff the Greeks are made of, and swagger is a mistake where real pluck exists.



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I felt for him very much, as he seemed so sorry for himself.

A few days after this I was reinforced by six or seven Turkish ironclads, and in fact commanded the position in spite of all remonstrances on the part of foreigners and other declared enemies of Turkish rule.

We went through the laughable farce of a trial of the 'Enossis' on board a vessel lying in port (I dare not land), which of course ended in nothing.

The Governor-General of Crete sent all the insurgents in Turkish ships to me to deal with, and this was the most difficult thing I had to do. Poor beggars, they were fine though misguided men. After giving them a good feed, for they were terribly hungry, I distributed them among the neighbouring Greek islands, and so finished the affair.

There are those who say that my acts off Syra were illegal, especially as to stopping the 'Enossis's' companions from leaving the port. All I can say is, the Greeks *en masse*, from the Government downwards, had paid so little regard to international law during three years, as regards their action in encouraging revolution in the territory of a friendly country, that a little stretch of the law on my part was quite justifiable.

While on the subject of Crete, which is always supposed to be in a chronic state of revolt, I would say a few words.

I maintain that the Cretan people, of whom I know a good deal, *do not want an alliance* with Greece, and if the always over-excited ambitious Greek committees would only keep quiet and give up agitation, the Cretans would be the happiest community in the Mediterranean.

While I commanded for more than a year a large squadron of Turkish ironclads stationed in Crete, I had many opportunities of judging as to the sentiments of the Cretans.

I never saw a more orderly, well-disposed people if let alone by agitators.

On my return to Constantinople the reception I received from several of the European Powers was most gratifying.

I received high honours in the shape of decorations, for having as they said by my conduct prevented a European war. My own country alone stood aloof from me. The Admiralty went so far as to tell me that if I did not immediately return to England, my name would be erased from the list of naval officers. An officer of high rank, a member of the Board of Admiralty, wrote to me a semi-official letter, in which he said, 'Unless you leave the Turkish service, you will be scratched off the list.' Feeling exceedingly hurt at such treatment, at a moment when I expected encouragement for having maintained the honour of my country while acting as a naval officer should have done, I wrote to



him, 'You may scratch and be d——d.' This letter was, I think, very unfairly quoted against me some time afterwards in the House of Commons. However, my name was erased from the list of naval officers, and was not replaced there for several years. I was well and kindly received by His Majesty the Sultan, promoted to the rank of full admiral, and settled down to my work as a Turkish naval officer, head of the staff of the Imperial Navy.



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It becomes a most delicate task to continue sketches of my life during the latter time that I have been in Turkey, because such anecdotes strike nearer home, that is to say, become more what may be called personal as regards my public and private doings. However, I will endeavour, somewhat briefly perhaps, to do so in a way that may be interesting to my readers, and offensive to no one.

It is not difficult to serve such masters as the Turks; they are always kind and considerate to strangers in their service, and if one avoids offending them in certain matters on which they are supposed to have prejudices, and if one while giving advice avoids offensive censure, it is easy to get on. While serving in Turkey my principal business has been relating to naval matters, regarding which I have had to propose certain progressive changes such as are being constantly introduced into foreign navies, more especially the English. These changes proposed by me have generally been accepted, and I can but think that many beneficial alterations have been introduced into the Turkish Navy tending to improve that service.

His Majesty the Sultan has named me one of his special A.D.C.'s, and in that capacity I have had at times and still have important duties.

His Majesty always treats me with the greatest kindness and consideration, and I have a sincere respect and affection for him, both as a sovereign, and, if I may presume to say so, as a friend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WAR WITH RUSSIA.

In 1877 the war with Russia broke out, and through the absence of any powerful naval enemy, little in the way of hard fighting was done; still some very important service was performed by the Turkish fleet, much more so than is generally known.

In the first place we had to hold the Black Sea, with its extensive sea-board. We defended Sulina and Batoum against Russian attack by land, and by torpedo on the sea. We had to watch the little swift packet-boats equipped as men-of-war, which constantly made a rush from Sebastopol and Odessa (as they did, by the way, in the Crimean War, when twenty to thirty English and French ships were watching them), and when they could get a chance burnt some unfortunate little coasting craft, sending the crews of such vessels adrift in small boats to make the best of their way to the nearest land. In addition to the above-named services, the Turkish fleet was called upon constantly to transport large bodies of troops from port to port.

On one memorable occasion the Turkish men-of-war and transports conveyed the whole of Suleiman Pasha's army, consisting of forty thousand men, from the coast of

Albania to Salonica, a distance of some eight hundred miles, within the short space of twelve days, a feat, I venture to say, unheard of in the naval annals of this century. Sulina was held safely by the Turkish fleet until the end of the war.



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Batoum could not have been held by Dervish Pasha and his army had not the Turkish fleet been there to help him. In short, that fleet kept the command of the Black Sea during the whole of that disastrous war, cruising at times in the most fearful weather I have ever experienced, for twelve months in a sea almost without ports of refuge; and it is a remarkable fact that the Turks never lost a ship, constantly attacked though they were, as I shall show hereafter, by the plucky Russian torpedo boats, who frequently made rushes at them from Muscovite ports, and only saved from destruction through the precautions taken against these diabolical machines, which come and go like flashes of lightning. It is true that *in the Danube* two small Turkish vessels of war were destroyed by torpedoes, but it must be borne in mind the Danube was under *military* law, and that the look-out kept on board these vessels was not by any means what it should have been.

But I must repeat, as so many contrary reports have been spread, that no Turkish ironclad was injured by torpedoes in the Black Sea.

I will explain hereafter how many attacks were made with no result whatever. Some few days before the war broke out I was sent to examine the Danube from a professional point of view, and it was soon made clear to me that much could be done, in the way of defending that great estuary, had nautical experience and the splendid material of which the Turkish sailor is made of been properly utilised. But alas! I found that, contrary to the views of His Majesty the Sultan, a line of action was followed showing that pig-headed obstinacy and the grossest ignorance prevailed in the councils of those who had supreme command in that river. I found that my advice and that of competent Turkish officers, in comparatively subordinate positions like myself, was entirely ignored, and that few, if any, proper steps were taken to prevent the enemy's progress into Roumania, and later on, to his passing the Danube almost unopposed.

On the day that war was declared I was at Rustchuk, the headquarters of the Turkish army. On that occasion I made a final effort, by making propositions which events have proved would have arrested the advance of the enemy.

I was simply told to mind my own business, and ordered to immediately rejoin my ships, which were at the moment lying at the Sulina mouth of the Danube.

It was all very well to tell me to do this; but to do so was apparently not so easy of execution, for the reason that the Russians had no sooner declared war than they took possession of the Lower Danube, by planting fortifications on the hills commanding the river in the neighbourhood of Galatz and Ibraila, at the same time laying down torpedoes across the river in great quantities (as regards the latter, it was so reported, though in my opinion it was no easy matter so quickly to place torpedoes). I informed the military commanders of this; their answer was, 'Go, and rejoin your ships *via* Varna, if you will only get out of this; we don't want your advice.' By this time, however, my

professional pride was wounded, and I determined to do something to show my contempt for them all.



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The only thing left for me to do for the moment was a little blockade-running, so I resolved to bring my ship back past the Russian barrier in the Lower Danube at all risks, instead of tamely returning by land. So great was the jealousy against me that I almost think the Turkish authorities commanding in the Danube would have been pleased if I had failed, and so come to grief. I had with me a very fast paddle-steamer called the 'Rethymo'; her captain and crew were what the Turks always are—brave as lions and obedient as lambs.

I took on board a river pilot, whom I gave to understand that if he got me on shore I would blow his brains out. Before starting I sent for my officers and crew and told them of the perhaps unnecessary dangers we should run in passing the Russian barrier, and gave to all the option of leaving or going on. They decided to a man to go on. I arranged my time so as to pass Ibraila and Galatz during the night. We arrived to within thirty miles of the former place at about five o'clock in the evening, when I was met by a Turkish official who was leaving Ibraila on the war having broken out. He was fearfully excited, and begged of me on his knees not to go to what he called certain destruction. He told me that he had seen the Russians laying down torpedoes that same day, that the batteries were numerous, and that they were aware of my coming, &c., all of which I took with a considerably large grain of salt, and left him lamenting my mad folly, as he called it.

Now I must be candid. I did not *feel* the danger. I calculated that to put down torpedoes in a current such as was in the Danube would be a matter of time, and probably they would not succeed after all. I had a plan in my head for passing the batteries, so as to render them harmless. So in reality I was about to attempt no very impossible feat. Three hours after dusk we sighted the lights of Ibraila. The current was running quite five knots an hour; that, added to our speed of fifteen, made us to be going over the ground at about twenty knots. It was pitch dark, and I think it would have puzzled the cleverest gunner to have hit us, though they might have done so by chance. I determined not to give them that chance, by going so close under the bank that the guns could hardly be sufficiently depressed to hit us.

As we approached the batteries to my horror a flash of red flame came out of the funnel (that fatal danger in blockade-running), on which several rockets were thrown up from the shore, and a fire was opened at where the flame had been seen. Meanwhile we had shot far away from the place, and closed right under the batteries. I heard the people talking; every now and then they fired shot and musketry, but I hardly heard the *whiz* of the projectiles. My principal anxiety was that we might get on one of the many banks so common in the Danube, and I had perhaps a *little* fear of torpedoes, especially when

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we passed the mouths of the little estuaries that run into the Danube; once we just touched the ground, but thank goodness we quickly got free, and though fired at by guns and rifles, went on unhurt. It took us exactly an hour and forty minutes to pass dangerous waters, and the early summer morning was breaking as we cleared all danger. I could not resist turning round and firing a random shot at the banks studded with Russian tents, *now that I was able to breathe freely again.*

I must say that my pilot, whom I at first suspected of being a traitor in Russian pay, behaved splendidly.

He told me he had never passed such a night of fear and anxiety: what with my cocked pistol at his head and the constant fear of putting the vessel on a bank, he certainly had had a bad time. However, I rewarded him well. On arrival at Toultscha, a small town near the mouth of the Danube, still held by the Turks, I found telegrams from headquarters at Rustchuk (the place I had left), inquiring if Hobart Pasha had passed Ibraila and Galatz, and ordering that if he had done so he was immediately to leave the Danube.

I cannot express my annoyance, as even at that moment I could have brought a couple of small iron-clads that were lying at Sulina into the river and played 'old Harry' with the Russian army, then advancing into Roumania, *via* Galatz. The bridge near Galatz could certainly have been destroyed. It was hard on the gallant Turks, hard on the Sultan and his government, and hard on me, to see such magnificent chances thrown away. From that moment I trembled for the result of the war. I felt that, although the Turks had a splendid army, and a fleet even for a first-class European Power to be proud of, the obstinacy and stupidity of the commanders of the Danube were sure to cause disaster.

Unhappily my prognostications came true. In war the first blow is half the battle, and it was sad to see such glorious troops out-manoeuvred at the very outset. His Majesty the Sultan in his wisdom has justly punished by banishment and disgrace these men who, instead of covering the Turkish nation with glory through the deeds of its army, were the cause of the defeat of the finest troops in the world. That the Russians might and would have been beaten, had the means in the hands of those commanding the Turkish army being properly utilised, is as clear as day. However, it is not my business to comment on such matters.

I now return to my own element, and will endeavour to describe some of the occurrences of the war in the Black Sea. The Russians had three lines of action in those waters. First, to capture Sulina, and to destroy the squadron lying at anchor in its roadstead; second, to capture Batoum and its much-envied harbour; third, the somewhat undignified action of sending out fast vessels, mostly mail-boats, armed with a couple of guns, their object being to destroy the Turkish coasting trade. These

vessels were most difficult to catch, as they always watched their opportunity to slip out of their strongholds when the Turkish ships were employed carrying troops, or otherwise engaged. There was, I venture to think, some illegality in this conduct of the Russian mail-boats.



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These vessels were not regular men-of-war, and they did not take their prizes into port for adjudication, as is usual in war, always burning what they could catch and capture. However, during war I suppose all must be considered as fair play. While on the subject, I will recount one or two exploits performed by these enterprising mail-boats. When lying off Sulina, one of the ironclad corvettes under my command arrived from Constantinople, where her captain reported having chased a well-known Russian mail-steamer called the 'Vesta'; that they had exchanged a few shots, that he had not followed her because his deck was loaded with guns for the Sulina batteries. I thought no more about it till about a fortnight afterwards I saw in the 'Times' a paragraph headed, 'Turkish ironclad driven off and nearly destroyed by the Russian mail-boat cruiser "Vesta."' This paragraph, which was founded on the official report of the captain of the 'Vesta,' was most sensational. It gave a graphic description of how the 'Vesta' had engaged at close quarters a Turkish ironclad, killing her crew; how officers in European uniform had been seen directing the working of the ironclad's guns, &c.; how her sides were crimson with the torrents of blood pouring from her decks, and how she would have been surely captured had the 'Vesta' been provided with sufficient ammunition to enable her to continue the bloody fight. It added that the gallant Russian commander was received with the greatest enthusiasm on his arriving at Sebastopol, and immediately promoted to high rank and covered with decorations.

I could hardly believe my eyes when I read this utter nonsense. I know the Russians; they are brave and loyal fellows, and few indeed are there among them who have done (to say the least of it) so foolish an act as to make so unfounded a report.

However, the commander, whose name I will not mention, did not long wear his laurels. I suppose he trusted to the Turks saying nothing about it; but the truth was at last made public. A court-martial was assembled to try the case, and I believe he was dismissed from the service and deprived of his decorations. At all events I know for certain that he was disgraced by his superiors, and held up to ridicule by his brother officers. Serve him right! Swagger is always an error, and I don't think naval officers are generally given to it.

The next exploit of these cruisers I shall refer to was one that came under my own eyes, and was exceedingly interesting.

I was anchored with my flag-ship, a fine thirteen knot ironclad, and a couple of other vessels, at a port some few miles to the north of Varna, taking in coals, when the lookout man reported that he saw on the horizon a column of smoke. I knew that this was not a Russian cruiser, because these vessels always burnt smokeless coal. I guessed, however, what it was, namely, that one of the Russian cruisers was burning an unfortunate coasting vessel. On



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looking more closely from the mast-head of the flag-ship, I saw the masts and two funnels of a steamer very near to the burning ship. The cruiser was somewhat in shore of the place where I was lying. He seems to have made my squadron out about the same time I had seen him, and at once made tracks, as the Americans say, to get out to sea. In doing so he had to near us considerably, so much so that before steam was ready in the flag-ship I could pretty well discern what the enemy was. Some persons may be surprised to hear that the marauding vessel was no less a craft than the magnificent yacht of the Emperor of All the Russias, called the 'Livadia,' which had condescended to the somewhat undignified work of capturing small Turkish coasting craft. Who can fancy the 'Victoria and Albert' being sent to sea, during a war between England and France, to capture and destroy small coasting craft on the French shores! However, there was the fact; it was the 'Livadia,' and no mistake. And now commenced one of the most interesting chases I have ever seen. On our starting the yacht was about four miles ahead of us, steering a course that would take her straight to Sebastopol. She had got through all the necessary dangerous manoeuvres of crossing our bows, from her having been inshore of us, before we moved.

The weather was lovely, not a ripple on the water, dead calm.

We commenced the chase at 4.30 p.m. Unfortunately our decks were loaded with coal; however, we made a clean thirteen knots. At first it seemed as if we were coming up with the chase, so much so that I felt inclined to fire the long bow gun at her. But I always think and I say from blockade-running experience that firing more or less injures a vessel's speed; so I refrained from doing so. As night closed in a beautiful moon rose and made everything as clear as day. The equality of our speed was most remarkable, inasmuch as the distance between us did not vary a hundred yards in an hour. All night we were watching, measuring distances with nautical instruments, &c., hoping at moments that we were nearer, despairing at others that she was gaining from us. We threw overboard fifty or sixty tons of coal, to no avail; we could not get within shot of the 'Livadia,' to capture which I would have given all I possessed. As day broke we saw the crew of the 'Livadia' busily employed throwing overboard coal and water. Sebastopol was in sight, and she was running for dear life to that haven of safety. Lightening her had certainly a good effect, for it was sadly evident to me that on doing so she drew ahead a little, but very little. Now I hoped she would burst her boiler or break down ever so little; but so it was not fated, and the Emperor's yacht escaped by the skin of her teeth into Sebastopol, under the protection of batteries that opened a tremendous fire on my ship on my approaching, forgetful of their existence. I was obliged to clear out of that pretty sharply or we should have been sunk.

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An ironclad corvette that accompanied me, though some miles astern at the finish, ran so close in that she had her rudder shot away, and we had the unpleasant task of towing her out under a fire more like a hailstorm of shot and shell than anything I can compare it to. I am told the 'Livadia' would have shown fight. I have no doubt she would; Russians always fight well: but I think the result would not have been doubtful, and the Emperor's crockery and glass, to say nothing of the magnificent gettings-up in the cabins, would have lost much of their lustre during an engagement. So the glory of taking the Emperor's yacht into the Bosphorus was not to be mine. I cannot express my disappointment at losing such a chance. The only consolation I have is that I really believe the brave Russians would have blown her up, rather than allow such a disgrace to fall on their flag.

Since the war a Russian naval officer told me that he had under his command at Sebastopol, on the day of my chasing the 'Livadia' into that port, seven torpedo boats, with which he volunteered to go out and attack us. His request was not allowed. We discussed at some length the probable result. These are my views and arguments. I said to him, 'When I saw your boats coming out I should have steamed away. Now the speed of my frigate is thirteen knots. You would probably have had a speed of nineteen to twenty at most. Thus your rate of approaching me would have been six knots, no great speed with which to approach a vessel armed with Nordenfelt guns, and six other guns also, *en barbette*, firing grape, shell, &c. I am convinced we should have destroyed all the torpedo boats.' 'Well, then,' said the Russian officer, 'I should have followed and attacked you during the night.' 'There again,' I said, 'I think you would have failed, because before dark you could not have got near enough to me, on account of the opposition you would have met with from my fire, to remark the course I steered after sunset, which course I should have frequently changed during the darkness. A ship cannot be seen in the dark if she shows no light at more than five hundred yards' distance, and a moving ship would have been most difficult to hit; besides which, if I had stopped and put down my defences, what could you have done?' This discussion ended in the Russian officer admitting that he did not think he could have done much.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TURKISH FLEET DURING THE WAR.

To return to the doings of the Turkish fleet in the Black Sea during the war, Sulina was a point from the beginning always aimed at by the Russians. In fact, according to my humble ideas, Russia went to war to get possession of Bessarabia, the key of the Danube, and Batoum, the key to Asia Minor, and in a great measure to our Indian possessions. I think the sentimental story of massacres in Bulgaria was merely a blind whereby to catch the sympathetic

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support of Europe, and more especially the English philanthropists. I think this, because when the most awful cruelties were committed by the Bulgarians on the Turks *after* the war, we heard no outcry about massacres. However, I must not introduce politics into Sketches from a sailor's life; such would be out of place. Constant attacks were made by land and by sea on Sulina, which was held and defended by Turkish ships and their crews, who manned the small batteries they had planted at the mouth of the river. To the Russians, to destroy the Turkish squadron lying off that port was of great importance, as Sulina is entirely surrounded by water and great impassable marshes, which extend far inland, through which marshes the Danube runs, and thus can always be defended by ships.

The Turkish squadron generally consisted of five or six ironclads, and as the Russians had not ships wherewith to attack these ironclads, torpedo attacks (of which so much was and is expected) was their only chance.

My idea of defending these vessels when at anchor was by a cordon of guard-boats, with ropes made fast between them, so as to catch any attacking torpedo boat, either by fouling her screw as she advanced, or by stopping entirely her progress. Moreover, a torpedo boat thus stopped would, by catching the rope, draw the guard-boat on either side of her, or right on top of her. I must admit that while torpedoes at that time were supposed to be in their infancy, the defence prepared against their attack was also very much in its infancy, so these preparations were of the most primitive description.

The squadron, as I said, consisted of five vessels, which had been in the habit of standing out to sea every night, to avoid torpedo attacks. On the occasion I am writing about, they had returned to the anchorage on account of bad weather. A Russian steamer with five torpedo boats in tow started (as we afterwards learnt) from Odessa to hunt for the Turkish squadron, which, it was known to them through their spies, was in the habit of cruising off Serpent's Island, about eight miles from Odessa. The Muscovites were unable to find their enemy, and I don't wonder at it, for they were not in their usual cruising ground; even had they been there, to find them would have been difficult, as the Turkish ships always cruised in open order, burnt smokeless coal, and showed no lights. On being disappointed in finding what she wanted at sea, the Russian vessel steamed towards the anchorage off Sulina. As the weather was bad, her commander decided not to attack, and I fancy had to cast off his torpedo boats.



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One of these boats, if not more (I have never been able to ascertain precisely what happened to the five torpedo boats that left Odessa), made a dash at the Turkish squadron; the weather not permitting him to use his Whitehead, he decided to try what his pole torpedo would do. As he approached the head-most vessel, he found (as he explained afterwards to me) that *something* stopped his way, and he saw at the same time several black objects approaching him. Nothing daunted, he struggled to get close to the bows of the ironclad; when he got as near as he could manage he fired his torpedo, without, however, doing any harm to his enemy. Scarcely had he done this when he found himself in the water and his boat gone from under him: the real facts being that the black objects he had seen were the guard-boats, which were closing on him, the ropes that connected them together having fouled his screw, and caused the disaster; his boat was capsized and went to the bottom. Four or five of her crew were drowned, as he would have been, had he not been fished out of the water by the Turkish guard-boats, and made prisoner.

The name of this daring naval officer was Putskin. His cool courage was very amusing. When interrogated, while still in a half-drowned condition, he exclaimed in excellent English, 'Why the devil didn't I blow that ship up?' He was asked if he had any idea what stopped him, and it was suggested to him that something must have fouled his screw. He answered, 'I don't know what stopped me, but why the devil didn't I blow the ship up?' I told him that I had a sort of notion he might be hanged for using such a fearful weapon. He said, 'No brave man would hang me; but why,' &c.

He seemed to have only one idea, and that was he was a fool for having failed. He was too good a man to let go, so we kept him till nearly the end of the war.

Wherever he may be now he is a fine fellow, whose bravery I for one shan't forget in a hurry.

A short time after the above-named occurrence the Russians attempted an attack upon Sulina by land and water, with what object I have never been able to understand; as, if they had succeeded, they could not have held it so long as our ships were anchored in the offing. Perhaps their intention was, by driving us out of the river, to utilise its position for torpedo attacks.

I have explained that Sulina was surrounded by sea and vast marshes. Along the seashore there was a narrow causeway of sand, on which ten men could march abreast. The only other approaches were by sea and by the river, the latter, at about ten miles distance, being in the hands of the Russians. As a defence we had placed on the beach, at about a gun-shot's distance, several torpedoes, buried in the sand, and connected by electric wires with the batteries of Sulina. A simultaneous movement was made by three or four Russian gun-boats descending the river, and two regiments of troops accompanied



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by artillery were sent along the causeway. Suspecting something in regard to torpedoes, they drove before them as a sort of advance guard about two hundred and fifty horses without riders, it being the duty of the poor animals to take the shock of the explosion should torpedoes be placed on the beach. And so they did, for, on the horses passing the spot where the torpedoes were placed, an explosion took place through which several horses were killed. The rest turned right back, and the causeway being very narrow, dashed amongst the advancing troops, causing the greatest confusion, so much so that the whole party had to retreat and we saw them no more.

It is true that one of the small ironclads had about got the range of the advancing enemy along the sea-beach, so making their position rather precarious, but I believe that the real cause of the failure was the action of the horses.

In the meantime, the light draft Russian gun-boats came down the river, and began to fire shell and shot at a long range at the small town and fortifications of Sulina. This was answered by the temporary batteries alone, the ships being out of range. Desultory fighting went on for about twenty-four hours, when the Russians, finding the hopelessness of the enterprise, especially now that the troops had retired, gave it up as a bad job and steamed up the Danube again. This was the only serious attack made upon Sulina, which Russia could never have taken and held till she had destroyed the Turkish fleet. After this I went to Batoum, which place Dervish Pasha was gallantly holding against Russia. He was sadly in want of naval help, as the Russians had advanced by the sea-shore to within six miles of that much-coveted port. On arriving there I took the command of eight Turkish ships of war, besides transports that were constantly coming and going between Constantinople and Batoum with provisions, ammunition, &c., for the army and navy. Here, again, if the Russians could have disposed of the Turkish fleet they would have easily taken Batoum. By commanding the sea, even with a couple of vessels, they would have prevented supplies being sent. It must be remembered there was no way of supporting the soldiers and sailors except by sea. My first object was to drive the Russians, by the fire of the ships, more inland. This was easy enough, as of course the enemy had no guns with them to compare in range with those on board the ironclads. Some time after my arrival, however, they brought down two fifteen centimetre Krupp guns from Ardahan, guns that had a considerably longer range than our twelve-ton Armstrongs. They gave us some trouble; however, the position of the attacking camp was changed so as to be out of range of our guns, a move in every way satisfactory to the Turkish military commander. This action of our fleet gave great annoyance to the enemy, and it was determined if possible to make our lying at Batoum a dangerous if not impossible



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matter. This was to be done by the so-called almighty torpedo. I received notice from our secret agent at Sebastopol that a serious expedition was being organised, that the Turkish ships at Batoum were to be destroyed or *frightened away* at any cost. *Frightened away, indeed!* To the uninitiated a torpedo is a thing to frighten any one away. We had heard of magnificent results of torpedo trials in peace, how ships (I fancy only hulks) had been blown up, columns of water half a mile high being sent into the air, &c. Nothing, it was said, could save you. Whatever my ideas, however nervous I may have felt, I knew that those I was commanding had no fear—they don't know what it means, the more especially of a not understood possible casualty, and though more enlightened as to torpedoes and their accepted effects, I wasn't to show my people a bad example. When lying in bed in the middle of the night, having read the warning letter before retiring, I thought:—'Suppose one of these nasty things goes off and blows the flagship up at this moment. How pleasant! What cowardly things these are; no fair fight, up you go, unshriven. I have heard that a man who is hanged is likely to go to heaven; I wonder if the same chance would be given to him blown up by a torpedo?' These sort of feelings came over me. However, said I, 'Let us see if we can prevent their being realised;' so I went to work to try to do so. As a sportsman I calculated that to fire at a dark object in the night, especially when that object had a background of high hills such as we had at Batoum, was most difficult, so the first order I gave was no lights, not even a cigarette light; utter darkness under severe penalties. Next, considering that Batoum is a very small port, with an entrance difficult to find even in broad daylight, almost impossible in the night without the lighthouse as a guide, I ordered that the lighthouse should not be lighted. Then I arranged with the shore authorities that no lights should be seen in the town; this was more difficult, as there were many Russian friendlies in Batoum.

However, the application of somewhat severe discipline made Batoum like a city of the dead after dark.

In addition to these precautions I put a barrier of booms ahead of the ships lying in the port, placed guard-boats to watch it at the entrance of the harbour, and having done all this, I bided my time. For some nights, rather sleepless to me, though to my disgust I heard my officers snoring all round me, nothing happened (though, as I heard afterwards, a good deal had been going on outside the harbour), when, at about three o'clock in the morning of the third or fourth night after I had received the warning, I heard a row going on in the direction of the guard-boats and an explosion near to one of the outlying ships. I had hardly time to think, when something struck the chain of my flagship and seemed to spin past, like a fish in the water. Then dead silence. I immediately sent orders to the two fast cruisers, which were lying with steam up, to go to sea and reconnoitre.



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Suddenly I heard people on shore calling out (I forgot to mention that ships in Batoum harbour are always lashed to the shore). I sent my officer to reconnoitre, who found a gaping crowd standing round what they thought was a large fish lashing his tail, but what in reality was an unexploded torpedo with the screw still in motion. On things being calm I went myself to see what had happened generally during the attack, and found that a torpedo had struck the bows of one of the ironclads on the belt, at the waterline at an angle, had exploded, and scarcely left a mark; that a second torpedo had, after passing through the planks on the defensive barrier I had placed, *diverged from its course*, and gone quietly on shore as far as the left of the squadron; that a third, as I said, had struck the chain of the flagship and not gone off, but had run on to the beach. The parts of another torpedo were afterwards picked up, it evidently having exploded somewhere down below. So we could account for four torpedoes having been fired at us without effect; probably there were more. Those that were on the beach were in a very perfect state, and as soon as we had rendered them harmless, we made prisoners of war of them. Now I have been since informed of what went on outside Batoum. It seems that for three nights two fast Russian steamers, carrying torpedo boats, had been looking for Batoum, and as one of my informants said, 'We could not find it for love or money.' A couple of hours before daylight they had steamed off, so as to be out of sight before break of day. At last they had bribed a man to light a fire in the hills behind the town, and so on the fourth night they got somewhere near it, but they could not make out the ships on account of the *dark land behind* them. The time for steaming off having nearly come, they determined to have a shot at us, so fired five torpedoes into what they thought the centre of the Turkish fleet, with what result we have seen. The person who told me was one of them, and said it was sickening work looking for Batoum. It is true the nights were fearfully dark, so that the shape of the land could not be made out. He said that without the traitor's light they could not have found us. I am not saying by this that one should always trust to darkness; there are many other ways *now* of taking the sting out of torpedo attacks. It is needless to say that the steamers I sent out returned, having seen nothing. While the fleet was at Batoum, two or three more torpedo attacks were made on a smaller scale without effect; but I have bored my readers enough about torpedoes—all I know is that I can sleep now when in their vicinity. While in the Black Sea I several times went with two or three ships that could be spared from other duties and reconnoitred Sebastopol and Odessa, but being fully convinced of the helplessness of few or even of *many* ships against the heavy batteries of the present day, I did no more than look about me, occasionally exchanging shots with the enemy. As to burning defenceless towns and villages, I have always been thoroughly adverse to such things, so I never undertook it. Some people think war should be made as horrible as possible; in this I do not agree. I could easily have burnt the Emperor's palace at Yalta, but did not think it expedient to do so.



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I have already spoken in general terms of the great services rendered by the ironclads in moving the troops about, but I feel that, in justice to the gallant crews of the squadron I had the honour to command during the war, I ought not to bring this portion of my narrative to a close without mentioning more particularly a piece of work of that nature executed under my immediate direction.

The capture of Soukhoum-Kaleh had been followed up by the despatch of an expedition of some 4,000 men of all arms to a place some thirty miles down the coast, called Tchamchira. The military commander at Soukhoum had some idea, I believe, that this force would be able to make its way inland, and thus encourage risings amongst the tribes against the detested Muscovite rule. The country, however, was too unfavourable for the advance of invading troops, being swampy ground with thick bush where it was not an impenetrable forest. The Russians also got wind of the intended movement, and to make a long story short, had managed to collect a large opposing force. The expedition was landed, but that is all. Before much could be done to secure the position as a base—whilst the men in fact were making entrenchments—the Russians, who under cover of the forest that extended right down to the beach on either side had been stealthily making their preparations, attacked them on all sides, and but for the covering fire of the ironclads, fortunately still at anchor there, would undoubtedly have driven them into the sea.

The result of this action enabled the force to establish itself in the village, and hold possession of the small belt of cleared ground around it, the extreme limit of which was still within the range of the guns of the ironclads.

The position of this force, however, daily grew worse. The Russians had captured the fords, by which their retreat to Soukhoum was cut off. They were completely surrounded, and only owed their preservation to the continual presence of an ironclad. Under these circumstances it was thought advisable to withdraw the men, and Dervish Pasha entrusted me with the task. To give an idea of the precarious position of this force, I may mention that, as I approached the place in my flagship, we heard the sound of smart cannonading, and I found the guard-ship engaged with a battery of field-pieces. The Russians had recently received a large accession of force, and several field-guns of large calibre; and so, not content with troubling the camp daily with an enfilading fire, had thought to try conclusions with the heavy guns afloat. On our appearance the action ceased, the Russians withdrawing their battery into the safe shelter of the forest. The Russian fire had been well directed, and had the guns been heavier calibre, considerable damage would have been inflicted. As it was, the upper works and rigging were cut about a great deal, and two men killed and four wounded on board the ironclad. After a conference with the general



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in command, I proceeded to Soukhoum to make arrangements for transport. I had hardly arrived there when a message from Tchamchira arrived, urgently demanding assistance, as the Russians were advancing in great force. I hurried back with all the vessels I could collect to Tchamchira, three ironclad corvettes and two wooden paddle-wheel transports. Fortunately the Russian attack had not commenced, and the arrival of my squadron probably led to its postponement until too late. To remove 4,000 men, bag and baggage, with several batteries of field-pieces and a large amount of ammunition, was no easy task with the small amount of transport at my command. I made, however, what I considered to be the best disposition possible under the circumstances.

The corvettes and the paddle transports were moored in as close to the shore as possible, my intention being to cram them with men and stores first, leaving my flagship free to the last to manoeuvre off the Russian camp and shell it, should the slightest opposition be offered to the embarkation. The work commenced at daylight, and was actively carried on throughout the day and following night, the last batch of men coming off at dawn. The men were taken away from under the very teeth, as it were, of the Russians. The ships in shore were well within rifle range, and the boats passing to and fro were exposed the whole time to a fire from hidden foes. The enemy had been evidently overawed by my preparations, and doubtless thought it would be better for them to allow the invading force to retire unopposed. To avoid the chance of grounding, in case I should have to use the frigate fire to cover the embarkation, a volunteer crew had proceeded off the Russian camp during the night, and laid down a line of buoys, to show the limit of distance to which the shore might be approached with safety. These buoys, glistening in the sunlight, doubtless suggested to the Russians that something dreadful was in store for them if they attempted to fire a gun, and so they contented themselves with watching from the trees, amongst the branches of which we saw a number of them perched like so many birds of prey. The whole credit of the embarkation is due to the efficient manner in which the naval officers under my command carried out the instructions given them, and the great docility of the Turkish soldiers. Soon after sunset the general and staff left the shore, and their example was followed by every military officer of any rank; so that the whole work devolved upon those I had placed in command of the beach and the boats.

The men marched down quietly by themselves and everything went on like clockwork. I must confess that I passed a most anxious night, as I knew not but what at any moment the enemy might make a rush into the entrenchments the Turks were abandoning, in order to claim a victory. My own ship was getting lumbered up, and I knew that before long it would be impossible to work more than one or two of the guns in case of need. That the Russians, however, could not know this, was my comfort; but I must own that it was a great relief to me when the last detachment left the shore. The poor fellows had

been holding the outposts all night. They came in at the double, and little time was lost over their embarkation.



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We steamed off at once to Soukhoum, and there disembarked the expedition. Shortly after this I was called upon to prepare for a veritable exodus. The evacuation of Soukhoum had been decided upon, but His Imperial Majesty felt that the poor people, who had been expecting a permanent deliverance from the Russian yoke, could not be abandoned to those whose vengeance they had excited. Intimation was therefore given that all those desirous of leaving the country should be carried to Turkish territory, and provided with lands to form new settlements. The whole population pretty well made up its mind to leave, and came marching into Soukhoum with their flocks and herds, and household goods and chattels. Suffice it to say that, with the vessels under my command, I shipped off and landed at Batoum, Trebizonde, Sinope, and other ports on the Turkish coast something like 50,000 people, counting men, women, and children, within the space of a fortnight.

CHAPTER XX.

SPORT IN TURKEY.

I will now endeavour to give my readers some idea of life at Constantinople. If the resident is a sportsman he can find plenty of amusement, game of all descriptions being plentiful. I may say that the shooting begins about September 1, when great flights of quails pass the environs of Constantinople, from the threatening winter of Russia to the warmer climate of Egypt, and afford capital amusement. But really to enjoy the sport it is necessary to go somewhat far, within ten miles of Constantinople. The fields during the quail season are filled with so-called sportsmen to such an extent that one has every chance of being mistaken for a quail, and potted accordingly. I have counted at St. Stephano, a place about nine miles from Stamboul, celebrated for *treaties* and quails, both in due season, more than five hundred sportsmen accompanied by howling curs of every description. Such a sight is worth looking at, but for sport, well—it is better to leave gun and dogs at home.

I once ventured out among the motley crowd of quail-shooters; there happened to be a flight of quails, so the fire kept up very much resembled a field-day on Southsea Common. I was hit all over with (thank goodness!) very small shot, and made a rapid retreat to save my skin from perforation.

However, going some distance along the coast, away from the enemy, one may at times get capital sport during the months of September and October; for example, a single gun may bag a hundred and fifty to two hundred quails in a day.

After the quail comes the partridge shooting, which is very good, especially in the islands of the Turkish archipelago, where there are great numbers of red-legged partridges affording famous sport.

To properly enjoy the shooting in Turkey a yacht is necessary, as the best of it is to be found in the islands and near to the sea-coast, in places quite inaccessible to roads.



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For example, the islands of Mitros, Lemnos, and Mytelene abound in partridges, and the shooting there is really capital.

Either by bringing a yacht from England, or by hiring one at Constantinople, the real sportsman may have great amusement while shooting, with Constantinople as headquarters. He will find in Asia Minor deer of all descriptions, wild boars and wolves. Then he will have capital sport with geese, ducks, woodcocks and partridges, and snipe.

Occasionally he must rough it somewhat while sleeping in villages some little distance from the sea-coast for a night or two, instead of retiring on board his floating home, and on this head I would give a word of advice to the sportsman. Always take up your quarters in a Turkish village, if possible, in preference to a Greek village. At the former you will find the traditional hospitality of the Oriental, even among the very poor people, practised in every sense of the word; whilst in the latter you will be *exploite* (there is no English word that signifies as well what I mean) to the last degree, even to the pilfering of your cartridges.

I have seen on arriving at a Turkish village every one vie with the other, and doing their very utmost to make the sportsman and his party comfortable. I have seen 'harems,' such as they are, cleaned out and prepared as a sleeping apartment, all the inmates huddling together in some little corner. I have remarked one old woman arrive with a couple of eggs, another with what was perhaps her pet fowl, to be sacrificed at the altar of hospitality—in fact, only one idea seemed to animate them, namely, hospitality, and it is touching to see how they shrink from the proffered reward made by the sportsman on leaving these kind though poor and long-suffering people.

There are different kinds of deer to be found in Asia Minor, which strangely enough imitate the habits of the inhabitants, Greek, Turk, and Armenian, by not herding together.

First, there is the large red deer which generally inhabit the high mountains and are difficult to get, except when the winter snow drives them down into the lower grounds. I have been fortunate enough to kill several of these splendid animals during my sojourn in Turkey. I will give my readers an account of how I shot two of them. One day during the winter, when the mountains were covered with snow, I received news that three deer of the largest description were in a ravine at the foot of a mountain some six hours' distance from Ismid. I immediately started off in pursuit. I must mention that all persons of high rank in Turkey have, or had at the time I write of, by their shooting firman, the right to call upon the villagers in the neighbourhood in which they are shooting to assist in driving or searching for game. In my case it was not necessary to take advantage of such an offer; every one was on the alert for my arrival. The people told me that that very morning they had seen the noble beasts I was after, grazing outside the wood. So, gathering the villagers, boys carrying horns, men (much against

my will) carrying guns, accompanied by every available dog, from the grand shepherd's dog to the yapping cur of the village, off we started.



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The ravine was thickly wooded, and extended far up the mountain, where it ended in a bare spot without trees. To this place I went alone, leaving the crowd behind me with directions not to move till I was in my place, which instruction they most strictly followed. After half an hour's walk I arrived at the place I have named. I had hardly time to regain my breath when I heard a row below me as if Bedlam had been let loose. I loaded my gun with buckshot in one barrel and ball in the other, and remained as quiet as a mouse. As the noise of the beaters and dogs approached me, I heard a crash in the bushes within about forty yards of me, and presently a magnificent stag as big as a cow came slowly out of the cover, looking behind him, evidently not expecting an enemy in front. As soon as he was well clear of the bushes, I fired at him with buckshot and killed him dead. I hardly had time to think, when, with a tremendous rush, two other large deer broke out of the wood straight at me at full gallop. I fired a bullet at the foremost one, which turned back into the woods apparently wounded, and so it proved, for it ran among the beaters, evidently having lost its head, and was soon despatched among dogs, men and guns. He was a stag also, and as I claimed to have shot him, I may say that I had the luck to shoot a brace of splendid stags right and left. There is not a sportsman in Europe who would not have been delighted at such a chance of red deer like these; such as are not seen anywhere except in Asia Minor. The largest one had nineteen points to his antlers, weighed when cleaned a hundred and fifteen okes, equal to three hundred and twenty pounds English measure, and certainly was the largest stag I have ever met with, either in Scotland or in Austria. During the sixteen years that I have passed in the East I have only succeeded in killing four of these splendid animals. This I attribute very much to the want of proper deerhounds, which unfortunately I have not been able to procure.

The crowd of beaters make so much noise that the deer slip away at the sides of the thick covers unseen, whereas dogs would drive them more in a straight line towards the shooters if they are properly posted. In addition to this, it is always a great advantage when the hounds give tongue, and so warn the sportsman of the whereabouts of the game. These hounds, called 'colpoys,' can be procured in Roumania and Hungary. There is another description of deer found near the sea-coast in some parts of Asia Minor, which I will describe. It is in fact the pure wild fallow deer that stocks the parks of Europe, and if I am rightly informed is only to be found wild in Asia Minor, and even there it is rare.



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I understand that in India or in Africa, where there are hundreds of different sorts of deer, the real fallow is not to be found. While shooting at a place called Camaris, near to Gallipoli, two years since, I discovered several herds of these deer, beautiful creatures, wild as hawks, and accordingly laid myself out to shoot some of them if possible. I tried driving, stalking, and every manoeuvre to circumvent them, without success. At last one day I started with my beaters to a place where there were many tracks of fallow deer. I was posted at a sort of small mountain pen, having on one side of me a young friend of mine, and at the other a native (these fellows won't go out unless they are allowed to carry their guns).

Shortly after the beaters had begun to halloo, a fallow hind glided by between me and my young friend, like a ghost. Not a sound in the wood gave notice of its approach. It was even quieter in its movements than a hare would have been. I put up my gun to fire, but seeing my friend's head right in the way and in a line with its muzzle, I waited a second, but the deer was gone. I had scarcely got over my disappointment when I heard the branches breaking in the wood very near to me, and suddenly a deer sprang right over my head, taking a flying leap, like a hunter would do over a fence.

This unusual action on the part of the deer called for unusual action on my part. As he had taken a flying leap over my head, I took a flying shot at him a second before he landed on the other side of me. The result was that he rolled over like a rabbit, shot *from underneath* through the heart. This deer proved to be a very fine specimen of the fallow, every point showing him to be of that species, except his antlers, which were quite straight. This I cannot account for; the natives, who had remarked this deer on several occasions feeding with the herd of fallow deer, called it the 'Cassic Boa,' which means 'straight-horned.' Some time after this I had some good sport with the fallow deer. Having got more accustomed to their habits, I found that it was of no use trying to approach them, their scent being too keen, their eyesight too sharp; the only way to get them is by very careful, in fact I may say scientific, driving.

Good boar shooting may be had by going some little distance from Constantinople. It usually is done either by beaters or with boarhounds; but I have had very good sport at boar while hunting for woodcocks and pheasants, in what may be called covert shooting—not exactly English covert shooting, in which almost every tree is known by the keepers, but in coverts of great extent, in which there are almost impassable thickets, made still more impassable by a well-known bramble called the 'wait a bit,' a thing that hooks on to your eyelids as you pass.

There it is that in these coverts spaniels, half-English, half country-bred dogs, do frequently the work of beaters, and it is a strange fact that while piggy starts at once from his lair at the approach of the boarhounds, he will not budge an inch for the little yapping spaniel, whom he treats with contempt.



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I have known many instances when, on hearing a jolly row in the covert, I have crawled in on my hands and knees, and found a boar being bayed by my spaniels—in fact, I have killed more pigs in this way than in any other. The danger is that you may have your dogs killed by the boar; this has happened to me on one or two occasions, more especially with young dogs.

I had once a cunning old spaniel dog (poor 'Dick,' well known to most sportsmen out here), who has frequently come out of the wood with his mouth full of pig's hair, he evidently having torn the hair off the animal while laying in his lair. (Dick was never hurt by a pig.) I have often surrounded, with my brother sportsmen and myself, large bushes in which the piggies were securely hidden, driven them out, and shot them as one would do hares or rabbits.

I have heard a good deal of the danger of pig shooting, on account of the savage propensities of the animal; but I have found that, with very rare exceptions, the Anatolian wild boar always runs. It is true that they (she or he, the females are the most savage) have a nasty knack of giving a sort of jerk with their heads, when fighting or even passing an enemy, and that jerk means to a man the ripping up of his leg from his heel to his thigh, to a dog the tearing open of his entrails.

On one occasion I was out cock shooting, when some shepherds' dogs in a valley adjoining that in which I was walking started a large wild boar, a beast they call a '*solitaire*,' from the fact that he is always seen after a certain time of life alone. The animal made for a ridge dividing the valleys; on getting there he passed along the skyline, about eighty yards from where I was. I changed my cartridges and fired a ball at the pig, who rushed away, apparently unshot; on going to the spot, however, where he had passed when I fired, I found some drops of blood. This blood I traced for about half a mile, till I came to a large clump of bushes into which my spaniels dashed, evidently close to their game. I heard a tremendous row in the bushes, had hardly time to prepare when the great beast with his eyes all bloodshot and foaming at the mouth rushed straight at me. I was on a narrow path, from which there was no escape, as the boar was tearing up it, followed by the dogs. I fired a ball straight in his face, at the distance of about two yards, in spite of which he rushed straight on, knocked me clean over, and while passing me made the usual dangerously effective jerk I have alluded to above, by which he cut my *boot from the ankle to the thigh*, drew a little blood just above and inside of the knee; after which the boar rushed headlong for about thirty yards and dropped dead. I found that my bullet had smashed through his forehead straight between the eyes and gone into his brain.

He was an enormous brute, weighing when cleaned twenty-one stone; carrying the finest tusks I have seen anywhere as belonging to a wild boar. I only had one man with me; we were what may be called eight miles from anywhere. Still I was determined not to leave my prize; so I sent my man for a country waggon, and sitting down on my now harmless beast, smoked cigarettes and waited quietly till the vehicle came.



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Now, *apropos* to wild boar attacking people, I am convinced that this animal had no intention of attacking me.

He was, though badly wounded by the first shot, running from the dogs, and I got in his way. *Voila tout!* On only one other occasion I nearly came to grief while boar shooting. On my arriving at a Turkish village one night, I was told that there was an enormous boar in the neighbourhood, who for a long time had been the terror of the country, inasmuch as he, accompanied by a large party of the pig tribe, had rooted up the crops all round the village, destroyed gardens, and tradition even said had killed children and eaten them (this latter story I don't take in). However, the poor people prayed me with tears in their eyes to rid them of their enemy, which I promised to do if possible. So the next morning off we started in the following order: first, myself and friends, accompanied by the elders of the village armed with old-fashioned guns; then the young men with knives and big sticks, the women and children bringing up the rear as lookers-on. I and my two friends were escorted into the centre of a large wood, in which very original *seats in trees* had been knocked up for us. The object of these seats was for our personal safety, but I as a sportsman saw at once that to be up a tree was not only advantageous in that respect, but also that we should be much more invisible, hidden among the branches of a tree, than by being stationed on the ground. So we mounted our trees, and the beaters went into the woods some half a mile from us. I never heard such a row as they made when they began the drive; they beat drums, fired guns, rang bells, and it was evident to me that no wild beast would hold to his lair under such a torrent of abuse. I found the words they were using were curses on the wild boar. I saw two or three fallow deer glide past me, with their usual ghostlike silence, and shortly afterwards the woods very near me seemed to shake with something coming. Suddenly some fifteen to twenty wild boar appeared among the bushes, coming straight towards me. The first of these was an enormous brute, evidently *the* boar we wanted.

I heard shots on either side of me from my friends, but I kept my eye on the big boar. To my astonishment he came right under the tree where I was sitting, and stopped to listen.

He cocked his head on one side, looked all round him, but forgot to look up the tree he was quite close to, in which was his enemy.

Taking advantage of this I fired a ball and an S.S.G. cartridge into him, before he could make up his mind which way to go; he gave a tremendous grunt and rolled over. I had not time to be overjoyed at my luck before I found myself rolling on the ground alongside of my victim, who, not being dead, was by no means a pleasant companion. The fact is that the seat on which I had been perched, having been very carelessly put up, had given way, and down I came from a height of about twelve feet. The branches of the tree had broken my fall, but my gun had fallen out of my hand and I had sprained my ankle, so that I was in rather an awkward position. The boar was shot through the spine, and could not get along, though he made frantic efforts to get at me.



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It was of no use my calling out for help; everybody was calling out, everybody was excited, firing at the lots of pigs that were running about in all directions. At the moment when I began to think affairs somewhat serious (I tried to get up and walk, but could not do so on account of my ankle), as the boar was crawling towards me, looking very mischievous, two great shepherd's dogs arrived on the scene, and went straight in for my enemy. Poor beast! He made a gallant fight; he could hardly move, but he could use his head, and he tore one of the dogs open in a frightful way; then two or three men came up, but they were afraid to go near to the boar. I made them hand me my gun that was lying on the ground near me, with which I soon put a stop to the battle. Then all the people began to muster round their dead enemy, and it was laughable to see and hear how they abused and kicked the body of the pig. How to get the carcass away was the next question. We sent for two waggons and four or five Christians (as the Turks won't touch pig), one to carry me, the others the boar; so, after being placed in the waggons, we made with piggy a triumphant return to the village. Luckily the village was on the sea-shore, and my yacht was lying close to the land, so I got on board comfortably; but it was several days before I could walk.

I believe that that pig was *nasty*, and would have given me the jerk if he could have done so. Five other boar were killed on that occasion, one of my friends killing two; but I had the honour of killing *the* boar of the period in that part of the world. While referring to that neighbourhood, I would mention that it was within five miles of the place I have been writing about that poor Captain Selby, of H.M.S. 'Rapid,' was killed, some two years since. There are people who think that he was attacked and murdered by robbers. Such is not the case; his death was a most unfortunate occurrence brought on by a misunderstanding.

It is true that the man who shot poor Selby was an ignorant savage, but there was no premeditation. It was a word and a blow. The latter, though inexcusable to the last degree, was given by a ruffian whose class are in the habit of shooting and stabbing one another (let alone strangers, whom they detest) at the slightest provocation. They are not natives of Turkey, but come of strange tribes who live far away and are hired to guard the sheep in the winter months, returning to their homes in the summer. I went myself to the spot where the sad occurrence took place shortly afterwards, and found the people very penitent and very frightened. Let us hope that the punishment awarded to the principal actors in the sad affair will be a salutary warning for the future.

As brigandage may be considered as in some way connected with sporting, inasmuch as many refrain from going out shooting when they fear being robbed and murdered, I will say a few words about brigandage in Anatolia.



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I have been for seventeen years an ardent lover of sport in Turkey, and have generally shot in Asia Minor. I have slept in villages that were supposed to be inhabited by brigands. I have been almost alone among an armed crowd of beaters, all of whom had the reputation of being robbers, but I have never been robbed or threatened with robbery. Perhaps there exists a sort of sympathy between brigands and sportsmen, for I cannot call to mind any instance of a sportsman being robbed. It is true that sometimes a fat financier, or rich *rentier*, who may have called himself a sportsman, has been carried off and ransom demanded for him, but a real sportsman never.

It is true that in some of the villages where dwell the peoples of a nation I am not supposed to love, you are liable to and probably will be *exploite* to a considerable extent in the way of pilfering cartridges, &c., but it is their nature to. So, brother sportsmen, when you come out here take your abode in Turkish villages.

CHAPTER XXI.

SPORT AND SOCIETY.

I have mentioned, in what I have written above relating to sport, the name of a somewhat celebrated spaniel of mine, whose name was 'Dick.'

The commencement of this bow-wow's career was as strange as the many adventures he afterwards went through. When he was quite a young dog, he once worked with me all day in ice and snow, and at last fell down lifeless. A heavy snowstorm was raging, and as poor Dick seemed quite dead, we made him a grave in the snow and covered him up with leaves and bushes. We accomplished this with difficulty, on account of the blinding snow and the streams that were much swollen by torrents from the mountains. Dick's burial-place was about eight miles from where the vessel was lying. We all got on board that night. I was deeply grieved at the loss of the dog, who had already shown great promise as a first-class sporting dog, a most difficult thing to procure in this country. What was our astonishment the next morning at daylight to see Dick on the beach, making piteous howls to draw attention to his whereabouts. He was warmly welcomed, as may be supposed; he did not seem a bit the worse for his brief sojourn in the grave, and went out shooting again the same day as happy as ever. This enthusiastic little spaniel was always doing strange things; he followed every fox and every badger into their holes, and we have had, time after time, to dig him out covered with blood and fearfully mauled, after having passed perhaps twenty-four hours in the earth.

Mr. Dick generally hunted alone, occasionally coming near to see that I was all right. Now this sounds bad for Dick's qualities as a sporting dog, but such a dog is necessary in a thickly-wooded region such as I shot in, when one wants to know what is in the country.



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Dick, when he found anything, barked loudly; and this drew attention to the fact that there was game in that quarter. Sometimes, of course, he drove the game away; at others he drove it towards me. At all events he went to places where I never could have gone. On one occasion I heard a great noise among some long reeds near a lake where I was duck shooting—Dick barking, some other animal making a strange noise. This went on so long that at last I went to see what was the matter. After much trouble I got into the reeds and approached the noise, which was momentarily getting worse. On coming close I found an animal about Dick's size standing on its hind legs and fighting with its fore paws, Dick covered with blood, fighting hard and watching an opportunity to close with his enemy. On my approach the animal dropped on to fore paws and endeavoured to escape, on which Dick jumped on to him, thus making it very difficult for me to use my gun. However, at last, by watching my opportunity, I fired a shot which disposed of the fighting powers of the beast, which turned out to be a very large badger. I never could understand what he was doing so far away from his place of refuge. Was he after ducks, or what? The animal was at least a quarter of a mile away from dry land, being in the middle of a marsh, overgrown with reeds. Another of Mr. Dick's adventures ended more unfortunately for him, as I fear he never got over its effects. I again, as on the last occasion, heard him evidently furiously engaged with something in a thick wood. After crawling on my hands and knees for some time, I found Dick and two other of my spaniels in furious combat with an enormous wild cat, who when I came up was holding her own against the dogs. The beast got her back against a tree, and was fighting all three dogs, keeping them at a respectful distance. My man seized a piece of wood, more like a little tree than a stick, and made a blow at the cat, which blow unfortunately came down with great force on Dick's head. The poor dog lay senseless for some time, and then crawled away, seeming to say, 'I'll have nothing more to do with you.' He never recovered that blow, and became quite a different dog, dying some months afterwards.

The feathered game shooting is very good in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. Pheasants, though rare, may be obtained five or six in a day. I have killed fifteen to my own gun, and with a party of three we bagged sixty-six in three days.

Snipe shooting is also very good. An idea of the bags that may be made will be seen when I say that at Besika Bay, close to the Dardanelles, I killed in three days three hundred and three snipe, an average of one hundred and one a day. When there is snow lying on the hills there are plenty of cock; myself and two friends having killed in three days two hundred and ninety-eight long bills.



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My best bag in cock has been sixty-three in one day's shooting alone. I have lately taken to punting after ducks, and have been very successful. One gets twenty to thirty a day, and occasionally a swan. I once killed four of the latter with one shot from my punt gun (one of Holland & Holland's). Hares are not very numerous; to get three or four in a day is counted good luck; but one generally picks up one or two during a day's shooting. Thus the sum of what you have in this country is red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, pigs, wolves, and bears (as to the latter, rare), hares, pheasants, cocks, snipe, quails, and ducks; so that a man who lays himself out for sport and has a yacht can have plenty of amusement between September and March.

The coast of Karamania, taking in all the coast from some distance below Smyrna, passing Rhodes and so on to the Gulf of Ayas, affords all the way along capital sport to yachting men. For example, in the large gulfs of Boudroum and Marmorice, capital anchorage will be found, and a country almost virgin as far as sport is concerned.

Some years since, while commanding an English ship-of-war, I had the good fortune to be sent on a roving commission against pirates that were supposed to infest that coast. Somehow I always *imagined* that pirates were more or less sportsmen, so I hunted for them in places that looked gamey, and thus made the acquaintance of many almost unknown, or at all events unfrequented, harbours and creeks, in which I had famous sport. On the coast of Karamania the ibex is to be found in considerable quantities; the red-legged partridge and the francolin are also very abundant, and give capital sport.

There are also at the head of the gulf I have alluded to large marshes for duck and snipe. The most celebrated, because the best known place in the part I am alluding to, is the Gulf of Ayas, into which runs the well-known (to all naval sportsmen) river called the Jihoon. A yacht must anchor at some distance off the entrance of this river, but the anchorage is quite safe in all weathers. Getting over the bar of the river is a matter at times of considerable difficulty, but once inside the bar you are in the paradise of shooting. A small steam launch is necessary to stem the strong current, and to tow another boat up with tents, provisions, &c. It is true that in my time we had no steam launches, and I shall not forget the hard work we had to take two boats sufficiently far up the river to get well into the shooting grounds, and even after two days' struggling we did not arrive so far as I should have wished (we, in fact, only got four miles up the stream). Still we had some rare sport, the more especially with pigs and francolin. The morning after we had pitched our tents some wandering Arabs came to us and offered to beat the woods, which they declared to be full of wild boar. They told us that the habit of these animals was, on being driven, to take to the river



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and swim to the other side; so we placed our guns along the banks and told the boat to guard the river from pigs swimming across, and try to stop them as best they could. The guns available for the shore work consisted of myself and two friends and my coxswain, who was armed with a ship's rifle. The Arabs went into the bush on horseback; the beat had hardly begun when a lot of pigs were started, all making for the river; three of these were knocked over. As they approached several others dashed into the river, and a most amusing hunt was made after them by the sailors. Not being armed with rifles, their weapons of offence against piggy were revolvers, ropes, and the stretchers of the boats.

There was, as may be supposed, great excitement among the men when the pigs took to the water; they at once went at them, firing revolvers, pulling after them as they swam, using language not allowed in these refined days in the navy; and, before we got to the scene of action they had lassoed as it were two fine pigs, and tied them to trees on the river-side, and when we arrived were firing their revolvers at them apparently with very little effect; however, we soon gave the animals the *coup de grace*. Thus we killed five pigs in our first drive. We took the liver, alias fry, out of the pigs to eat (it is most excellent), cut off the heads of the tuskers, and hung the remaining parts on a tree to wait our return, changing our camp further up the river the same night. The next morning early I took a stroll into the woods by myself; while looking about me I saw what I thought was a large animal sleeping in the bushes. I began accordingly to stalk him. I got within eighty yards, put my gun up to shoot, but as I could not pitch on a vital part to aim at, only seeing a mass of what was evidently an animal rolled up, I went nearer and nearer; in fact, little by little, I got within ten yards of the quarry; then I fired a ball into what I now saw was a huge pig. No move! What did it mean? I could not have killed it sleeping. However, I took courage and went close and put my hand on the beast; what should it be but an immense boar lying dead in his lair. He must have died months before I found him, as the skin fell to pieces on being touched, the hair into powder; his head was a splendid one, but I could only save the jawbones, in which were a grand pair of tusks. The moral of this was that pigs, like everything else, die—sometimes quietly in their beds, be that retreat only a lair in the forest; but it is a rare occurrence to find relics of wild animals in so perfect a state. I fancy their friends and relations generally eat them. The bed or lair he was lying in was a most snug spot, and he would have been quite invisible had not some of the brushwood been burnt away, Arab fashion, a short time before I found him.



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I must warn any sportsman intending to shoot in the Jihoon river that the wandering Arabs who are to be found there, though not brigands of a high order, are petty thieves to the last degree. We were always obliged to keep a watch in our tents, leaving a man behind in charge when we went on shooting excursions. On one occasion we found on our return that our watchman had captured an old woman whom he caught in the act of creeping under the tent and stealing a spoon. I had myself a curious adventure. An Arab told me that he knew where a boar was lying in the long grass, and that he would take me to the spot if I would accompany him. We started off together, and on getting well into the wood we went on our hands and knees, crawling under the trees and brushwood, towards the spot where the boar was supposed to be. We had to keep quite close together. I carried round my neck a very pretty silver whistle, which I prized exceedingly. Suddenly, when we were in a very thick part of the bush, the Arab seized hold of my whistle and held it tight. I immediately grasped the hand that held the whistle; this I did with my right hand holding his left. He, with his right hand, tried to draw a knife. I, with my left, tried to get my gun to bear on him, but there was so little room to spare on account of the thick bush that both our operations were difficult of performance. As soon as I saw him trying to draw a knife, I dropped the hand with the whistle, and seized that with which he tried to draw the knife. Thus the play went on for two or three minutes; neither of us spoke, all our energies were directed on our different games. At last, by turning round a little, I succeeded in giving him a tremendous kick, which rolled him over on his back; then my gun was free, and I held it to his head, upon which he took an attitude of supplication on his knees, and prayed for quarter. I made him give me his knife, go on all-fours again, and creep before me out of the wood. This was a most audacious attempt at petty robbery. I should like to have peppered him a little, but he was so penitent, I decided to let him go. I don't think he meant to stab me; I think he merely wanted to cut the string that held the whistle. These men were not generally murderers. On this trip we killed twelve pigs, a hundred and seven francolin, one lynx, and lots of cock and ducks. Coming back to the ship I, and those with me in my boat, very nearly came to utter grief. There was a good deal of sea on the bar of the river. The cutter that was with me got over all safe, but my whale-boat being loaded heavily with pigs, &c., refused to rise with the waves, and not doing so, the consequences were that she filled and capsized. We had all to jump and make for the shore, a distance of nearly a mile, being in the greatest danger while doing so of getting into the current of the river. Any one who had done this must have been washed away and drowned; however, thank goodness, all hands were saved. The whale-boat was afterwards picked up, having been washed out to sea, but we lost all tents, spare guns, &c.; the pigs remained in the boat, as they were stowed under the thwarts, and hadn't room to float out; so, friends, take warning of the bar of the Jihoon river.



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It was about this time that I received a report from some American missionaries to the effect that one of their comrades had been robbed and murdered by some Arabs who inhabited the mountains near Alexandretta, people whose evil deeds had for some time past brought them into notoriety. Although I was under orders to join the commander-in-chief, I took it upon myself to remain and assist the Americans in hunting down if possible the murderers of their comrade.

I confess I was made more zealous in the cause from hearing that there were 'lots of big game on the hills.' I invited two or three of these American missionaries to join my mess, and off we went to look for the murderers. As this is a chapter on shooting, I will as briefly as possible state what we did in the official way. In the first place we anchored at the head of the Gulf of Ayas, near a large town where resided the chief authority of the neighbourhood in which the murder had been committed. I landed with the missionaries, several of my officers, and some marines to act as an escort, and paid an official visit to this gentleman, who was called the caimakam, or chief magistrate. This great man told us that we should certainly with his assistance find the people we were after. He suggested that we should accompany him with a small body of our men, to which he could add some of his zeptiehs: that thus accompanied he would go to a place on the hill where we should find what we wanted. He said that a little 'backsheesh' was necessary. This latter we found, and the next day we started.

We ascended amongst the most magnificent wooded hills I ever saw. 'Such places for game!' thought I, till at last we halted at a clump of splendid oak trees. Under one of these a grand luncheon was spread, of which we were all invited to partake. During the luncheon a man rushed up to our host and whispered in his ear something which seemed to give him great satisfaction, for he at once smilingly said, 'Captain, I have found the men you are after;' and sure enough we saw approaching two ruffianly looking fellows, tied together, and being dragged along by men on horseback. I hope they were the right men. I will presume that they were, but they had been very quick in catching them. After my missionary friend who spoke their language had interrogated the prisoners, he requested that they might be kept apart, which was done, and they were given in charge of separate sentinels, to whose horses they were tied. We then returned to our lunch, our pipes, and our coffee. Suddenly we heard a pistol shot, a rush, and a scream from the neighbourhood of the prisoners. It seems that one of them had drawn the pistol from his guardian's belt, shot him dead, jumped on to the horse, and galloped off. Everybody, marines and all, tried to follow. Such a row never was heard; but the man knew the country, and we saw him no more. I was rather glad, for he must have been a plucky fellow.



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The other prisoner was doubly secured and taken down to the village. He was afterwards hanged, so justice was satisfied and my work finished. I got a letter of thanks from the President of the United States, of which I was and am still very proud, and meant to have used had blockade-running brought me to grief.

This business being satisfactorily concluded, I asked my friend the caimakam if there was any big game to be had. His answer was, 'Chok au Va,' which meant there was plenty: and he undertook to beat the neighbouring woods that very day with his men. We were told that there were plenty of roe deer, foxes, jackals, &c., so we loaded our guns with S.S.G. cartridges (which means, I may tell it to the uninitiated, buck-shot). We were stationed on the outskirts of a splendid oak wood that looked like holding any mortal thing in the way of game. Soon as the beaters set to work cocks began to fly about in all directions, but we had an instinct that something more important would turn up, so took no notice of feathered game. I was watching close, trying to look through almost impenetrable brushwood, when I heard a rustling sort of noise near me, and suddenly I caught sight of something which almost made my hair stand on end—a great tiger leopard, creeping, stealthily as a cat, out of the wood, within twenty yards of where I was standing. Fortunately he did not look my way. What was I to do? My gun, as I said, was loaded with buck-shot; a miss or a wound would have been sure to bring the brute on top of me. However, I did not hesitate more than a couple of seconds; I pointed my gun at his heart just behind the shoulder, and pulled the trigger. The whole charge went straight where I pointed it, and the tiger rolled over on his back. I put a ball into my gun and approached him very gingerly. When I got close to him I found he hadn't a kick in him. His claws were crunched up as if grasping something, his grand eyes were growing dim, and though, to make all sure, I fired a ball into his head, it was not necessary, as I found nine buckshot in the heart. He was a splendid beast, eleven feet from tip of tail to end of nose. It was said that he had killed a shepherd some days before, so he deserved his fate.

Before returning to the ship that evening, we arranged that the Arabs should turn out the next day to drive the covers on the beach near the ship, which were supposed to hold deer and pigs. I must mention that these Arabs are very different to the wandering tribes we had lately been amongst; they are warlike, unscrupulous, and dishonest. We made an arrangement with them that *all* game killed should belong to us, the beaters being paid in gunpowder, which they prized very much. The Arabs thought we should only find pig, and as Mussulmen won't touch it, the bargain was considered satisfactory to both parties.



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It so happened that at the first drive a very fine deer, of a species I had never seen before, broke cover. I had the luck to shoot him, and as the ship was lying very near, we hailed her for a boat in which to send off our game. I saw a good deal of whispering among the Arabs, who, after some discussion, informed us through one of the missionaries, who kindly acted as interpreter, that the deer must belong to them, as they only promised to give the pigs, and they openly declared we should not take it on board. I wasn't going to stand this, for many reasons. In the first place it was necessary to show these people that we were their masters; secondly, by our agreement the deer was ours. When the boat (a cutter with ten men unarmed) had come on shore, I gave orders for the men to return and bring their arms and ten marines, also armed. The Arabs, of whom there were about one hundred armed to the teeth, seemed firm in their decision; so was I. When I pointed to my armed men, who were by this time landing, they pointed with the same significant gestures to their armed men. At this critical moment, my first lieutenant, seeing that something was wrong, fired a shell right over our heads to intimidate the Arabs, and the result showed that it had that effect. The deer was lying on the beach. I ordered the marines to form a cordon round him, and the sailors to bring up the boat stretchers on which to lay the animal. When all was ready I gave the command to carry it away and put it in the boat. The Arabs cocked their muskets and made a move forward; the marines turned and faced them. I thought we were in for a fight; however, the bearers carried off their charge and placed it in the boat, when to my astonishment the Arab chief put down his musket and came and made his salaam to me, asking if he might be allowed to visit the ship. I, of course, was delighted. We took him and several of his friends on board, and the visit ended in their all getting roaring drunk, being hoisted over the ship's side and landed on the beach. So passed off what might have been a serious affair. I might have become involved in a long explanation to show that I was right in protecting my game by armed force, but under all the circumstances I feel that I was fully justified in doing so.

I should like before finishing these sketches to say something about the society of Constantinople. As one cannot always be out shooting, it is very important to our happiness to have something to fall back upon in the social way. I was told once by a very great friend of mine, who saw that I was inclined to fret, 'to take everything as a joke.' If one's liver is in good order it is very easy to do so, but sometimes the contrary is the case, and it makes one at times quite savage to see the airs that are temporarily put on by those that form the so-called upper or diplomatic society of Pera. Here are really amiable people so utterly spoiled by the exalted idea of their own dignity that they become



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absolute bores, especially to any one accustomed to good society. If you go to a soiree you see grouped together, for fear of contamination with the outsiders (without which a successful party cannot be formed), the members of the so-called 'sacred circle,' talking to each other in dignified (or undignified, as the case may be judged) whispers. While all are cheerful and gay, you scarcely see a smile on the countenances of these tremendous swells.

If you go in the street you will meet a creature dressed in most gorgeous apparel, armed to the teeth with firearms that probably won't go off, knives and daggers covered with precious stones, walking solemnly along. If you look carefully among the crowd in his wake you will discover some one, or ones, walking with an indignant swagger at being hustled by the vulgar crowd. The man in gold, armed to the teeth, is what is called a *cavass*, and these swells behind are the representatives, male or female, of some foreign potentate, taking a walk. It would be quite *infra dig.* to go without one of these useless appendages. Again, if an individual not belonging to the 'sacred circle' meets a foreign representative who condescends to speak to him, and while he is doing so another member of an embassy 'heaves in sight,' the first swell will immediately sheer off, looking ashamed at having so far forgotten himself as to be seen speaking to any one outside 'his circle.' You may occasionally be invited to the houses of these exalted personages, but there is always an implied condescension in their attitude which tends to negative the effect of their good intentions. And all this is a great pity, because these people must be tired of each other, and would find quite as much intelligence outside as inside their circle. Besides, there are charming people among them who would ornament any society, but their ill-acted airs of 'brief authority' quite spoil them, and make them, as I said, bores to themselves and to those who would be their friends.

I will, in proof of what I say, relate a short anecdote as to what occurred in the house of a friend of mine.

This friend gave a very large fancy dress ball, at which two or three hundred people were present. The ball was in every way a success, but as the giver did not belong to the 'sacred circle,' the members of that body only condescended to go for a short time. I have no doubt (for there are lots of jolly people among them) that they would have liked to have stopped much longer, but it was not thought 'dignified.' So, after a short time, most of the 'sacred circle' sneaked away. One of them who had two charming daughters, devoted to dancing, not having noticed the departure of the great people till that moment, came hurriedly to my friend and said, 'Goodnight, I *must go*, every one is gone.' 'Every one?' said my friend, 'why, look at the rooms, there are at least two hundred people dancing and amusing themselves.' 'Yes, I see,' said the diplomat (he was rather a small one), 'but I mean the ambassadors and their parties, are gone, so I *must go*; but for once, to please you, I'll leave my daughters.' I believe my friend

answered, 'You may go to the d—I.' This is a fact, and shows the unfortunate system that ruins to a great extent the sociability of society in Pera.



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Now it is true that all these people are called barons, counts, viscounts, &c., but my friend belongs to a right good family, and would have been more than the equal of many of them had they met in Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Berlin, or Vienna. The title of baron, &c., seems to me to be always given to a diplomat *ex-officio*. However, barons or no barons, the rule of exclusiveness laid down by the 'sacred circle' at Constantinople is to be deplored as it injures society sadly. Few large parties are given now except those got up by the great people. When an outsider sends out invitations for a ball, or any other kind of *reunion*, the negotiations that go on between the swells as to whether they should patronise it or not are comical in the extreme. Should ever so slight an omission in the form of these invitations, or a mere accident in the delivery thereof, appear to them to touch their dignity, they will probably all absent themselves in a body, even were it question of the marriage or the funeral of one of their oldest and most respectable acquaintances. Not being one of them, and not caring very much for artificial society, I look on with great amusement. Some one gave great offence on a late occasion, while describing society in Pera, by suggesting that if there were a European court here things would be very different; so they might. People would then find their level, as they do in other capitals.

I feel very sorry for the members of the 'sacred circle.' Not only do they lose much now, but it will be awkward for them when they go back from whence they came. A short time ago I asked a very high and mighty personage if she did not fear the change that must come when she left Constantinople. She answered with great frankness: 'I feel that most of what you say is correct, but before I came here I was very small fry; now I know I am a swell, and mean to enjoy myself.' She was like those reckless ones who cried: 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I have seen a stand made by one or two of these mighty ones, an attempt to break down the system of pompous exclusiveness, but that attempt unfortunately failed.

I must say that the foreign colonies in Pera are much to blame, for they worship with all their minds and all their strength their different chiefs and chieftainesses, and human nature being weak, &c. &c.

Apart from the 'sacred circle' there is a nice little society where people go in for enjoying themselves, and succeed in doing so very comfortably; but even there, with some few exceptions, there is that secret longing for one or two of the swells—even a junior secretary of an embassy is looked upon as a desideratum.

The Greeks keep very much to themselves; so do the Armenians. The Turks are exceedingly fond of going into society, but their domestic arrangements tend to prevent their entertaining.

His Majesty the Sultan frequently invites European ladies to his dinner parties, and those who have had that honour must have thoroughly enjoyed the delicious music and the pleasant entertainments after dinner at the Palace of Yildiz. I don't see why His

Imperial Majesty's example is not followed by some of his subjects; perhaps we may yet come to that by-and-by.



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In what I have said about society in Pera I have not meant to be personal or offensive in any way. My object has been to show up a rotten system whereby everybody suffers. I have some remote hope that things may change for the better, especially as one of the chief promoters of the system has now left Constantinople.

If I bring these pages to a somewhat abrupt conclusion, it is because I have had the bad luck to get a chill out shooting, and have been somewhat seriously ill. However, I have hope that there is 'life in the old dog yet,' and that I may before long have some other adventures of a similar description to add to these 'unvarnished sketches' of my life.

EXTRACT FROM THE 'DAILY TELEGRAPH,'

June 21, 1886._

'There will be some slight and melancholy satisfaction to his sorrowing family, and his many friends, in the knowledge of the fact that Hobart Pasha, a short time before his death, had prepared for publication a memoir of his stirring life and adventures. The only fault, if fault there be, in this record, may lie in the circumstance that its readers may think it too brief. At all events, we shall be told what Hobart had been about ever since the year 1836. It is certain that he never was idle. Even before he had passed his examination for lieutenant, he had distinguished himself while serving in the squadron told off to suppress the slave trade in Brazilian waters: and in those days our naval operations against the Portuguese traders in "blackbirds" involved considerable peril to life and limb.

'Eighteen years, however, elapsed before Captain Augustus Hobart was able to shot his guns in view of the broadside of a European foe. He had previously enjoyed two years' half-holiday at home; that is to say, he had been appointed, as a reward for his services in South America, to a lieutenancy on board the Royal yacht, the Victoria and Albert, then commanded by the late Adolphus Fitz-Clarence. But in the historically momentous year 1854 there was serious business to be done by Lieutenant—now Commander—Hobart. A diplomatic squabble between France and Russia about the Holy Places in Palestine developed into an angry quarrel between the Emperor Nicholas, France, and England. We went to war with Russia. A magnificent squadron of British first-rates was despatched to the Black Sea with the avowed object of destroying the Russian Fleet, which had characteristically annihilated the Turkish Fleet in the harbour of Sinope. We did not do much in the Black Sea beyond running the Tiger on shore, where her crew were captured by the Muscovites. We bombarded Odessa perfunctorily, and precisely in that portion of the city where our shot and shell could do the least harm. We did not destroy the Russian Fleet, for the sufficing reason that the Russian Commander-in-Chief sank all his three-deckers full fathom five in the harbour of Sebastopol.



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'In the Baltic, however, there was a little more fighting to show for the many millions sterling wrung from the British taxpayer. To the coasts of Finland was sent a splendid Armada, commanded by one of the bravest seamen that ever adorned the glorious muster-roll of the Royal Navy of England, Admiral Sir Charles Napier. Under his orders was Captain Augustus Hobart, in command of Her Majesty's ship *Driver*. "Lads, sharpen your cutlasses!" thus began the memorable manifesto addressed by the hero of St. Jean d'Acres to the gallant tars. The Baltic fleet was to do wonders. The lads, with their cutlasses very well sharpened, went aboard the Russian war-ships before Cronstadt, stormed the seven forts which guard the entrance to that harbour, and sailed up the Neva even to St. Petersburg itself. It is true that ere the war was over a spy informed Lord Augustus Loftus, then Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin, that a certain channel or waterway existed unguarded by any fort at all, by which a British flotilla with muffled oars could have got quietly into the Neva without taking the trouble to destroy the Russian fleet or to blow the seven forts of Cronstadt into the air. The revelations of the spy went for nothing; and, after the cutlasses of the lads in blue-jackets had been sharpened to a razor-like degree of keenness, those blades, for some occult reason, were not allowed to cut deep enough; the only cutting—and running into the bargain—being done by the Russian fleet, which, safely ensconced in the harbour of Cronstadt, defied us from behind the walls of fortresses which we did not care to bombard. Still, the Baltic fleet was not wholly idle. There was some fighting and some advantage gained over the Russians at Helsingfors, at Arbo, and notably at Bomarsund. In all these engagements Commander Hobart distinguished himself—so brilliantly, indeed, as to be named with high approval in official despatches.

'Soldiers in peace, Bacon has remarked, are like chimneys in summer. Hobart seemed resolved that the aphorism quoted by Francis of Verulam should not be verified in the case of sailors. The fire of the Earl of Buckinghamshire's son was always alight, and he became, during the great Civil War in America the boldest of blockade-runners. When the Confederacy collapsed Hobart, by this time a Post-Captain, received overtures of employment from the Turkish Government, and in 1868 he was appointed, as Admiral Slade had been before him, to a high command in the Ottoman Navy. It was a curious illustration of the various turns of fate here below to find in 1869 the Sultan, the Commander of the Faithful, sending the Giaour Hobart Pasha, the erst Secesh blockade-runner, to the island of Crete to put down blockade-running on the part of the intensely patriotic but occasionally troublesome Greeks. Hobart was entrusted with unlimited powers, and he accomplished his mission with so much vigour and with so much skill as to insure the good graces of the Porte, and he soon rose to



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be Inspector-General of the Imperial Ottoman Navy. Although his name was necessarily erased from the list of the Royal Navy when he definitely threw in his lot with the Sultan on the breaking out of the Turko-Russian war, all English admirers of pluck and daring were glad to learn at a comparatively recent period that the Honourable Augustus Charles Hobart Hampden had been reinstated by Royal command in his rank in the British Navy.

'It was the good fortune of the distinguished maritime commander just deceased, to win golden opinions from all sorts of peoples, and his name and prowess will be as cordially remembered in his native land, and in the Southern States of America, as on the shores of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn.

'A thorough Englishman at heart, he was none the less a fervent philo-Turk in politics and convictions, and latterly devoted his talents and his life to the defence of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. As ready with his pen as with his sword, he was a clear, trenchant, vigorous writer, and could talk on paper as fluently and as cogently about ironclads and torpedoes as about the wrongs of the natives of Lazistan, the necessity of upholding the integrity of the Turkish Empire, and of circumventing the dark and crooked wiles of Russian diplomacy. Altogether Augustus Charles Hobart was a remarkable man—bluff, bold, dashing, and somewhat dogged. There was in his composition something of the mediaeval "condottiere," and a good deal more of that Dugald Dalgetty whom Scott drew. Gustavus Adolphus would have made much of Hobart; the great Czarina, Catherine II., would have appointed him Commander-in-Chief of her fleet, and covered him with honours, even as she did her Scotch Admiral Gleig, and that other yet more famous sea-dog, king of corsairs, Paul Jones. It would be unjust to sneer at Hobart as a mercenary. His was no more a hired sword than were the blades of Schomberg and Berwick, of Maurice de Saxe and Eugene of Savoy. When there was fighting to be done Hobart liked to be in it—that is all. Of the fearless, dashing, adventurous Englishman, ready to go anywhere and do anything, Hobart was a brilliantly representative type. Originally endowed with a most vigorous physique, his constitution became sapped at last by long years of hardship and fatigue incident to the vicissitudes of a daring, adventurous career. He left Constantinople on leave of absence some months ago to recruit his shattered health, and spent several weeks at the Riviera. But it would seem that he experienced little relief from the delicious climate of the South of France, and it was on his homeward journey to Constantinople that this brave and upright British worthy breathed his last. The immediate cause of his death was, it is stated, an affection of the heart, a term covering a vast extent of unexplored ground. It would be nearer the truth to say that the frame of Augustus Charles Hobart was literally worn out by travel and exposure and hard work of every kind which had been his lot, with but brief intervals of repose, ever since the day, in the year 1836, when as a boy of thirteen he joined the Navy as a midshipman.'



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It will be gratifying to Englishmen to know that their distinguished countryman received at his burial all the honours due to his high station and noble qualities. Such a concourse of people of all ranks and nations had never been seen at any public ceremony on the Bosphorus as that which, on July 24, accompanied the remains of Hobart Pasha to their last resting place in the English cemetery at Scutari, not far from the spot where a tall granite obelisk records the brave deeds and glorious death of those heroes who perished in the Crimean War.

[Footnote 1: It must be understood that both men and boats were disguised so as to resemble the ordinary fishing coasters about those parts.]

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