

Anson's Voyage Round the World eBook

Anson's Voyage Round the World

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Anson's Voyage Round the World eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	8
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	10
Page 4.....	12
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	14
Page 7.....	15
Page 8.....	16
Page 9.....	18
Page 10.....	19
Page 11.....	21
Page 12.....	22
Page 13.....	23
Page 14.....	25
Page 15.....	26
Page 16.....	27
Page 17.....	28
Page 18.....	29
Page 19.....	30
Page 20.....	31
Page 21.....	32
Page 22.....	34

Page 23.....	35
Page 24.....	36
Page 25.....	37
Page 26.....	39
Page 27.....	40
Page 28.....	41
Page 29.....	42
Page 30.....	43
Page 31.....	44
Page 32.....	46
Page 33.....	47
Page 34.....	48
Page 35.....	50
Page 36.....	52
Page 37.....	53
Page 38.....	55
Page 39.....	56
Page 40.....	57
Page 41.....	58
Page 42.....	59
Page 43.....	60
Page 44.....	61
Page 45.....	62
Page 46.....	63
Page 47.....	64
Page 48.....	65

Page 49.....	66
Page 50.....	67
Page 51.....	68
Page 52.....	69
Page 53.....	70
Page 54.....	71
Page 55.....	72
Page 56.....	73
Page 57.....	74
Page 58.....	75
Page 59.....	76
Page 60.....	77
Page 61.....	78
Page 62.....	79
Page 63.....	80
Page 64.....	81
Page 65.....	82
Page 66.....	84
Page 67.....	85
Page 68.....	86
Page 69.....	87
Page 70.....	88
Page 71.....	89
Page 72.....	90
Page 73.....	91
Page 74.....	92

Page 75.....	93
Page 76.....	94
Page 77.....	95
Page 78.....	96
Page 79.....	98
Page 80.....	99
Page 81.....	100
Page 82.....	101
Page 83.....	102
Page 84.....	103
Page 85.....	104
Page 86.....	105
Page 87.....	106
Page 88.....	107
Page 89.....	108
Page 90.....	109
Page 91.....	110
Page 92.....	111
Page 93.....	112
Page 94.....	113
Page 95.....	114
Page 96.....	116
Page 97.....	118
Page 98.....	119
Page 99.....	120
Page 100.....	121

Page 101.....	122
Page 102.....	123
Page 103.....	124
Page 104.....	125
Page 105.....	126
Page 106.....	127
Page 107.....	128
Page 108.....	130
Page 109.....	131
Page 110.....	132
Page 111.....	133
Page 112.....	134
Page 113.....	135
Page 114.....	137
Page 115.....	139
Page 116.....	141
Page 117.....	143

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
INTRODUCTION.		1
ANSON'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD.		3
		6
		12
		17
		19
		24
		26
		29
		33
		35
		38
		41
		42
		46
		50
		53
		60
		65
		68
		70
		73
		76
		79
		81
		83
		84
		86
		93
		96
		100
		102
		105
		106
		110
GLOSSARY.		113

Page 1

INTRODUCTION.

It was in the reign of Elizabeth that England first became the enemy of Spain. Rivals as yet Spain had none, whether in Europe or beyond the seas. There was only one great mmilitary monarchy in Europe, only one great colonising power in the New World, and that was Spain. While England was still slowly recovering from the prostration consequent upon the Wars of the Roses, and nearly a century had to run before she established her earliest colony in Newfoundland, the enterprise and disciplined courage of the Spaniards had added an enormous empire across the Atlantic to the already great dominions of the Spanish crown. In 1520 Magellan, whose ship was the first to circumnavigate the globe, pushed his way into the Pacific and reached the Philippines. In 1521 Cortez completed the conquest of Mexico. Pizarro in 1532 added Peru, and shortly afterwards Chile to the Spanish Empire.

From the gold mines of Chile and the silver mines of Peru a wealth of bullion hitherto undreamed of poured into the treasuries of Spain. But no treasuries, however full, could meet the demands of Phillip II. His fanatical ambition had thought to dominate Europe and root out the newly reformed religion which had already established itself in the greater part of the north and west, and nowhere more firmly than among his subjects in the Netherlands and among the English. England for years he had seemed to hold in the hollow of his hand. The Dutch, at the beginning of their great struggle for freedom, appeared even to themselves to be embarking upon a hopeless task. Yet from their desperate struggle England and Holland rose up two mighty nations full of genius for commerce and for war, while Spain had already advanced far along that path of decline which led rapidly to the extinction of her preeminence in Europe and the loss of her colonies beyond the seas.

By the daring genius of Drake and the great English seamen of the age of Elizabeth the field of operations was transferred from the Channel to the American coast. The sack of Spanish towns and the spoil of treasure ships enriched the adventurers, whose methods were closely akin to piracy, and who rarely paused to ask whether the two countries were formally at war. "No peace beyond the line" was a rule of action that scarcely served to cloak successful piracy. In Spanish eyes it was, not without reason, wholly unjustifiable.

The colonial policy of Spain was calculated to raise up everywhere a host of enemies. In her mistaken anxiety to keep all the wealth of her colonies to herself she prohibited the rest of the world from engaging in trade with them. Only with her might they buy and sell. The result was that a great smuggling trade sprang up. No watchfulness could defeat the daring and ingenuity of the English, Dutch, and French sailors who frequented the Caribbean Sea. No threats could prevent the colonists from attempting

Page 2

to buy and sell in the market that paid them best. The ferocious vengeance of the Spaniards, which in some cases almost exterminated the population of their own colonies, converted the traders into the Buccaneers, an association of sailors of all nations who established themselves in one of the islands of the Caribbean Sea, and who for three-quarters of a century were the scourge of the Spanish trade and dominions. Their cruelty was as remarkable as their skill and daring. They spared neither man, nor woman, nor child. Even half a century after their association had been broken up the memory of their inhuman barbarity was so vivid that no Spanish prisoner ever mounted Anson's deck without a lively dread, which was only equalled by the general surprise at his kindly and courteous treatment. The sight of an English sailor woke terror in every heart.

At last, in 1713, by the Treaty of Utrecht, that closed the famous War of the Spanish Succession, in which Marlborough gained his wonderful victories, Spain consented to resign her claim to a monopoly of trade with her colonies so far as to permit one English ship a year to visit the American coasts. But the concession was unavailing. It granted too little to satisfy the traders. The one ship was sent, but as soon as her cargo had been cleared she was reloaded from others which lay in the offing, and the Spanish colonists, only too glad to enrich themselves, actively connived at the irregularity. The Spanish cruisers endeavoured to enforce respect for the treaty. They claimed, not without justice, to search English vessels seen in American waters and to confiscate forbidden cargoes. English pride rebelled, and English sailors resisted. Violent affrays took place. The story of Jenkins' ear kindled a wild, unreasoning blaze of popular resentment, and by 1739 the two countries were on the verge of war. In the temper of the English people Walpole dared not admit the Spanish right of search, and he was compelled by popular feeling to begin a war for which he was not prepared, in a cause in which he did not believe.

It was at this point that Anson's expedition was fitted out.

George Anson was born in 1697. He came of a lawyer stock in Staffordshire. In 1712 he entered the navy as a volunteer on board the Ruby. His promotion was rapid, owing partly to his own merit, partly to the influence of his relations. By 1724 he was captain of the Scarborough frigate, and was sent out to South Carolina to protect the coast and the trading ships against pirates, and also against the Spanish cruisers, which were already exercising that right of searching English vessels that finally provoked the war of 1739. There he remained till 1730. He was again on the same station from 1732 to 1735. In 1737 he was appointed to the Centurion, a small ship of the line carrying sixty guns, and was sent first to the West Coast of Africa and then to the West Indies. In 1739 he was recalled to conduct the expedition which has made his name so famous.

Page 3

In the account of that voyage, which his Chaplain, Mr. Walter, wrote under his supervision, everything is told so straightforwardly, and seems so reasonable and simple, that one is apt to underestimate the difficulties which he had to face, and the courage and skill which alone enabled him to overcome them. Seldom has an undertaking been more remorselessly dogged by an adverse fate than that of Anson. Seldom have plain common sense, professional knowledge, and unflinching resolution achieved a more memorable triumph.

On his return from the great voyage he was promoted rear-admiral, and in 1746 he was given command of the Channel fleet. In 1747 he engaged and utterly overwhelmed an inferior French fleet, captured several vessels, and took treasure amounting to 300,000 pounds. For this achievement he was made a peer. In 1751 he became First Lord of the Admiralty, and to his untiring efforts in the preparation of squadrons and the training of seamen is due some part, at any rate, of the glory won by English sailors during the famous days of Pitt's great ministry. He died in 1762.

No finer testimony to his skill in choosing and in training his subordinates can be found than in the list of men who served under him in the *Centurion* and afterwards rose to fame. "In the whole history of our Navy," it has been said, "there is not another instance of so many juniors from one ship rising to distinction, men like Saunders, Suamarez, Peirce Brett, Keppel, Hyde Parker, John Campbell."

He was a man who had a thorough knowledge of his profession. No details were beneath him. His preparations were always thorough and admirably adapted to the purpose in view. Always cool, wary, resourceful, and brave, he was ready to do the right thing, whether he had to capture a town, delude his enemies, cheer his disheartened crew, or frustrate the wiliness of a Chinese viceroy.

Though without anything of the heroic genius of a Nelson, he is still one of the finest of those great sailors who have done so much for England; one of whom she will ever be proud, and one whose life and deeds will always afford an example for posterity to follow.

...

ANSON'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD.

CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE OF THE VOYAGE.—COMPOSITION OF THE SQUADRON —MADEIRA.

The squadron sails.

When, in the latter end of the summer of the year 1739, it was foreseen that a war with Spain was inevitable, it was the opinion of several considerable persons, then trusted

with the administration of affairs, that the most prudent step the nation could take, on the breaking out of the war, was attacking that Crown in her distant settlements. It was from the first determined that George Anson, Esquire, then captain of the "Centurion", should be employed as commander-in-chief of an expedition of this kind. The squadron, under Mr. Anson, was intended to pass

Page 4

round Cape Horn into the South Seas, and there to range along the coast, cruising upon the enemy in those parts, and attempting their settlements. On the 28th of June, 1740, the Duke of Newcastle, Principal Secretary of State, delivered to him His Majesty's instructions. On the receipt of these, Mr. Anson immediately repaired to Spithead, with a resolution to sail with the first fair wind, flattering himself that all his delays were now at an end. For though he knew by the musters that his squadron wanted 300 seamen of their complement, yet as Sir Charles Wager* informed him that an order from the Board of Admiralty was despatched to Sir John Norris to spare him the numbers which he wanted, he doubted not of his complying therewith. But on his arrival at Portsmouth he found himself greatly mistaken and disappointed in this persuasion, for Admiral Balchen, who succeeded to the command at Spithead after Sir John Norris had sailed to the westward, instead of 300 able sailors, which Mr. Anson wanted of his complement, ordered on board the squadron 170 men only, of which 32 were from the hospital and sick quarters, 37 from the Salisbury, with officers of Colonel Lowther's regiment, and 98 marines; and these were all that were ever granted to make up the forementioned deficiency.

(Note. Sir Charles Wager was at that time First Lord of the Admiralty in Walpole's Ministry.)

But the Commodore's mortification did not end here. It was at first intended that Colonel Bland's regiment, and three independent companies of 100 men each, should embark as land forces on board the squadron. But this disposition was now changed, and all the land forces that were to be allowed were 500 invalids, to be collected from the out-pensioners of Chelsea College.* As these out-pensioners consist of soldiers, who, from their age, wounds, or other infirmities, are incapable of service in marching regiments, Mr. Anson was greatly chagrined at having such a decrepit detachment allotted to him; for he was fully persuaded that the greatest part of them would perish long before they arrived at the scene of action, since the delays he had already encountered necessarily confined his passage round Cape Horn to the most vigorous season of the year.** They were ordered on board the squadron on the 5th of August; but instead of 500 there came on board no more than 259; for all those who had limbs and strength to walk out of Portsmouth deserted, leaving behind them only such as were literally invalids, most of them being sixty years of age, and some of them upwards of seventy.

(Note. A local name for Chelsea Hospital, a home for old and disabled soldiers. It was founded by Charles II and the buildings were designed by Wren.)

*(**Note. The squadron did not reach the neighbourhood of Cape Horn until March when the autumn of the Southern Hemisphere had begun and with it the stormy season.)*

Page 5

To supply the place of the 240 invalids which had deserted there were ordered on board 210 marines detached from different regiments. These were raw and undisciplined men, for they were just raised, and had scarcely anything more of the soldier than their regimentals, none of them having been so far trained as to be permitted to fire. The last detachment of these marines came on board the 8th of August, and on the 10th the squadron sailed from Spithead to St. Helens, there to wait for a wind to proceed on the expedition.

But the diminishing the strength of the squadron was not the greatest inconvenience which attended these alterations, for the contests, representations, and difficulties which they continually produced occasioned a delay and waste of time which in its consequences was the source of all the disasters to which this enterprise was afterwards exposed. For by this means we were obliged to make our passage round Cape Horn in the most tempestuous season of the year, whence proceeded the separation of our squadron, the loss of numbers of our men, and the imminent hazard of our total destruction. And by this delay, too, the enemy had been so well informed of our designs that a person who had been employed in the South Sea Company's* service, and arrived from Panama three or four days before we left Portsmouth, was able to relate to Mr. Anson most of the particulars of the destination and strength of our squadron from what he had learned among the Spaniards before he left them. And this was afterwards confirmed by a more extraordinary circumstance; for we shall find that when the Spaniards (fully satisfied that our expedition was intended for the South Seas) had fitted out a squadron to oppose us, which had so far got the start of us as to arrive before us off the island of Madeira, the Commander of this squadron was so well instructed in the form and make of Mr. Anson's broad pennant, and had imitated it so exactly that he thereby decoyed the "Pearl", one of our squadron, within gunshot of him before the captain of the Pearl was able to discover his mistake.

(Note. The South Sea Company was formed in 1711 on the model of the East India Company to trade in the Pacific; and on the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht it was given the monopoly of the English trade with the Spanish coasts of America. The grant of certain privileges by Government led to wild speculation in its shares which gave rise to the famous South Sea Bubble of 1720.)

On the 18th of September, 1740, the squadron weighed from St. Helens with a contrary wind. It consisted of five men-of-war, a sloop-of-war, and two victualling ships. They were the Centurion, of 60 guns, 400 men, George Anson, Esquire, commander; the "Gloucester", of 50 guns, 300 men, Richard Norris, commander; the "Severn", of 50 guns, 300 men, the Honourable Edward Legg, commander; the Pearl, of 40 guns, 250 men, Matthew Mitchel, commander; the "Wager",

Page 6

of 28 guns, 160 men, Dandy Kidd, commander; and the “Trial”, sloop, of 8 guns, 100 men, the Honourable John Murray, commander. The two victuallers were pinks, the largest about 400 and the other about 200 tons burthen; these were to attend us till the provisions we had taken on board were so far consumed as to make room for the additional quantity they carried with them, which when we had taken into our ships they were to be discharged. Besides the complement of men borne by the above-mentioned ships as their crews, there were embarked on board the squadron about 470 invalids and marines, under the denomination of land forces, which were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Cracherode.

The winds were so contrary that we had the mortification to be forty days in our passage from St. Helens to the island of Madeira, though it is known to be often done in ten or twelve. However, at last, on Monday, October the 25th, at five in the morning, we, to our great joy, made the land, and in the afternoon came to an anchor in Madeira Road.

We continued about a week at this island, watering our ships and providing the squadron with wine and other refreshments.

When Mr. Anson visited the Governor of Madeira* he received information from him that for three or four days in the latter end of October there had appeared, to the westward of that island, seven or eight ships of the line. The Governor assured the Commodore, upon his honour, that none upon the island had either given them intelligence or had in any sort communicated with them, but that he believed them to be either French or Spanish, but was rather inclined to think them Spanish. On this intelligence Mr. Anson sent an officer in a clean sloop eight leagues to the westward to reconnoitre them, and, if possible, to discover what they were. But the officer returned without being able to get a sight of them, so that we still remained in uncertainty. However, we could not but conjecture that this fleet was intended to put a stop to our expedition. Afterwards, in the course of our expedition, we were many of us persuaded that this was the Spanish squadron commanded by Don Joseph Pizarro, which was sent out purposely to traverse the views and enterprises of our squadron, to which in strength they were greatly superior.

(Note. Madeira then as now belonged to Portugal—a neutral power at that time usually jealous of Spain.)

CHAPTER 2. SPANISH PREPARATIONS—FATE OF PIZARRO’S SQUADRON.

Don Joseph Pizarro.

Page 7

When the squadron fitted out by the Court of Spain to attend our motions had cruised for some days to the leeward of Madeira they left that station in the beginning of November and steered for the River of Plate, where they arrived the 5th of January, Old Style,* and coming to an anchor in the bay of Maldonado at the mouth of that river their admiral, Pizarro, sent immediately to Buenos Ayres for a supply of provisions for they had departed from Spain with only four months' provisions on board. While they lay here expecting this supply they received intelligence by the treachery of the Portuguese Governor of St. Catherine's, of Mr. Anson's having arrived at that island on the 21st of December preceding, and of his preparing to put to sea again with the utmost expedition. Pizarro, notwithstanding his superior force, had his reasons (and as some say, his orders likewise) for avoiding our squadron anywhere short of the South Seas. He was besides extremely desirous of getting round Cape Horn before us, as he imagined that step alone would effectually baffle all our designs, and therefore, on hearing that we were in his neighbourhood** and that we should soon be ready to proceed for Cape Horn he weighed anchor*** after a stay of seventeen days only and got under sail without his provisions, which arrived at Maldonado within a day or two after his departure. But notwithstanding the precipitation with which he departed we put to sea from St. Catherine's four days before him and in some part of our passage to Cape Horn the two squadrons were so near together that the Pearl, one of our ships, being separated from the rest, fell in with the Spanish fleet, and mistaking the Asia for the Centurion had got within gunshot of Pizarro before she discovered her error, and narrowly escaped being taken.

(Note. The calendar as regulated by Julius Caesar in 46 BC assumed the length of the solar year to be exactly 365 1/2 days, whereas it is eleven minutes and a few with seconds less. By 1582 the error had become considerable for the calendar was ten days behind the sun. Pope Gregory XIII therefore ordained that ten days in that year should be dropped and October 5th reckoned as October 15th. In order to avoid error in the future it was settled that three of the leap years that occur in 400 years should be considered common years. So 1600 was and 2000 will be a leap year but 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not. The New Style (NS.) was adopted by Catholic countries. Protestant countries as a rule rejected it and adhered to the old Style (OS.). The result was a considerable confusion in dates as will be plain in the course of the book. The New Style was adopted by England in 1751, when eleven days had to be omitted, and September 3rd was reckoned as September 14th. Ignorant people thought that they were defrauded of eleven days wages. "Give us back our eleven days" became a popular cry against the Minister of the time. Russia and other countries under the Greek Church still adhere to the old Style and are now thirteen days behind.)

Page 8

(**Note. Anson's squadron was then at St. Catherine's in Brazil. See below, Chapter 3.)

(***Note. The Spanish squadron when it sailed from Maldonado consisted of the following ships: "Asia", 66 guns, flag ship; "Guipuscoa", 74; "Hermiona", 54; "Esperanza", 50; "St. Estevan", 40. The Asia was the only ship that ever returned to Spain.)

Pizarro with his squadron having, towards the latter end of February, run the length of Cape Horn, he then stood to the westward in order to double it; but in the night of the last day of February, OS. while, with this view, they were turned to windward the Guipuscoa, the Hermiona, and the Esperanza were separated from the Admiral. On the 6th of March following the Guipuscoa was separated from the other two, and on the 7th (being the day after we had passed straits le Maire) there came on a most furious storm at north-west, which, in despite of all their efforts, drove the whole squadron to the eastward, and obliged them, after several fruitless attempts, to bear away for the River of Plate, where Pizarro in the Asia arrived about the middle of May and a few days after him the Esperanza and the St. Estevan. The Hermiona was supposed to founder at sea for she was never heard of more and the Guipuscoa was run ashore and sunk on the coast of Brazil. The calamities of all kinds which this squadron underwent in this unsuccessful navigation can only be paralleled by what we ourselves experienced in the same climate when buffeted by the same storms. There was indeed some diversity in our distresses which rendered it difficult to decide whose situation was most worthy of commiseration; for to all the misfortunes we had in common with each other as shattered rigging, leaky ships, and the fatigues and despondency which necessarily attend these disasters, there was superadded on board our squadron the ravage of a most destructive and incurable disease* and on board the Spanish squadron the devastation of famine.

(Note. Scurvy.)

Famine.

For this squadron departed from Spain as has been already observed with no more than four months' provision and even that, as it is said, at short allowance only, so that, when by the storms they met with off Cape Horn their continuance at sea was prolonged a month or more beyond their expectation they were thereby reduced to such infinite distress that rats, when they could be caught, were sold for four dollars a piece and a sailor who died on board had his death concealed for some days by his brother who during that time lay in the same hammock with the corpse only to receive the dead man's allowance of provisions.

By the complicated distress of fatigue, sickness, and hunger, the three ships which escaped lost the greatest part of their men. The Asia, their Admiral's ship, arrived at

Monte Video in the River of Plate with half her crew only; the St. Estevan had lost in like manner half her hands when she anchored in the Bay of Barragan. The Esperanza, a 50-gun ship, was still more unfortunate, for of 450 hands which she brought from Spain only 55 remained alive.

Page 9

By removing the masts of the *Esperanza* into the *Asia*, and making use of what spare masts and yards they had on board, they made a shift to refit the *Asia* and the *St. Estevan*, and in the October following Pizarro was preparing to put to sea with these two ships in order to attempt the passage round Cape Horn a second time, but the *St. Estevan*, in coming down the River of Plate, ran on a shoal and beat off her rudder, on which, and other damages she received, she was condemned and broke up, and Pizarro in the *Asia* proceeded to sea without her. Having now the summer before him and the winds favourable, no doubt was made of his having a fortunate and speedy passage; but being off Cape Horn and going right before the wind in very moderate weather, though in a swelling sea by some misconduct of the officer of the watch the ship rolled away her masts and was a second time obliged to put back to the River of Plate in great distress.

The *Asia* having considerably suffered in this second unfortunate expedition the *Esperanza* which had been left behind at Monte Video, was ordered to be refitted, the command of her being given to Mindinuetta, who was captain of the *Guipuscoa* when she was lost. He, in the November of the succeeding year that is, in November, 1742, sailed from the River of Plate for the South Seas and arrived safe on the coast of Chile where his Commadore, Pizarro, passing overland from Buenos Ayres met him. There were great animosities and contests between these two gentlemen at their meeting occasioned principally by the claim of Pizarro to command the *Esperanza*, which Mindinuetta had brought round, for Mindinuetta refused to deliver her up to him, insisting that as he came into the South Seas alone, and under no superior, it was not now in the power of Pizarro to resume that authority which he had once parted with. However the President of Chile interposing, and declaring for Pizarro, Mindinuetta after a long and obstinate struggle, was obliged to submit.

But Pizarro had not yet completed the series of his adventures, for when he and Mindinuetta came back by land from Chile to Buenos Ayres in the year 1745 they found at Monte Video the *Asia*, which near three years before they had left there. This ship they resolved, if possible, to carry to Europe, and with this view they refitted her in the best manner they could; but their great difficulty was to procure a sufficient number of hands to navigate her, for all the remaining sailors of the squadron to be met with in the neighbourhood of Buenos Ayres did not amount to a hundred men. They endeavoured to supply this defect by pressing many of the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres, and putting on board besides all the English prisoners then in their custody, together with a number of Portuguese smugglers whom they had taken at different times, and some of the Indians of the country. Among these last there was a chief and ten of his followers who had been surprised by a party

Page 10

of Spanish soldiers about three months before. The name of this chief was Orellana; he belonged to a very powerful tribe which had committed great ravages in the neighbourhood of Buenos Ayres. With this motley crew (all of them except the European Spaniards extremely averse to the voyage) Pizarro set sail from Monte Video, in the River of Plate about the beginning of November, 1745, and the native Spaniards, being no strangers to the dissatisfaction of their forced men treated both the English prisoners and the Indians with great insolence and barbarity, but more particularly the Indians; for it was common for the meanest officers in the ship to beat them most cruelly on the slightest pretences, and often times only to exert their superiority. Orellana and his followers, though in appearance sufficiently patient and submissive, meditated a severe revenge for all these inhumanities. Having agreed on the measures necessary to be taken, they first furnished themselves with Dutch knives sharp at the point, which, being the common knives used in the ship, they found no difficulty in procuring. Besides this they employed their leisure in secretly cutting out thongs from raw hides, of which there were great numbers on board, and in fixing to each end of these thongs the double-headed shot of the small quarter-deck guns; this, when swung round their heads according to the practice of their country was a most mischievous weapon* in the use of which the Indians about Buenos Ayres are trained from their infancy, and consequently are extremely expert.

Spanish cruelty.

These particulars being in good forwardness, the execution of their scheme was perhaps precipitated by a particular outrage committed on Orellana himself; for one of the officers, who was a very brutal fellow, ordered Orellana aloft, which being what he was incapable of performing, the officer, under pretence of his disobedience, beat him with such violence that he left him bleeding on the deck and stupefied for some time with his bruises and wounds. This usage undoubtedly heightened his thirst for revenge, and made him eager and impatient till the means of executing it were in his power, so that within a day or two after this incident he and his followers opened their desperate resolves in the ensuing manner.

(Note. It is called a bola.)

A daring Adventure.

It was about nine in the evening, when many of the principal officers were on the quarter-deck indulging in the freshness of the night air; the waist of the ship was filled with live cattle, and the fore-castle was manned with its customary watch. Orellana and his companions under cover of the night, having prepared their weapons and thrown off their trousers and the more cumbrous part of their dress, came altogether on the

quarter-deck and drew towards the door of the great cabin. The boatswain immediately reprimanded them and ordered them to be gone. On this Orellana

Page 11

spoke to his followers in his native language when four of them drew off, two towards each gangway, and the chief and the six remaining Indians seemed to be slowly quitting the quarter-deck. When the detached Indians had taken possession of the gangways, Orellana placed his hands hollow to his mouth and bellowed out the war-cry used by those savages, which is said to be the harshest and most terrifying sound known in nature. This hideous yell was the signal for beginning the massacre, for on this the Indians all drew their knives and brandished their prepared double-headed shot, and the six, with their chief, who remained on the quarter-deck, immediately fell on the Spaniards who were intermingled with them, and laid near forty of them at their feet, of whom above twenty were killed on the spot, and the rest disabled. Many of the officers, in the beginning of the tumult, pushed into the great cabin, where they put out the lights and barricaded the door. And of the others, who had avoided the first fury of the Indians, some endeavoured to escape along the gangways into the forecabin, but the Indians placed there on purpose stabbed the greatest part of them as they attempted to pass by, or forced them off the gangways into the waist. Others threw themselves voluntarily over the barricades into the waist, and thought themselves happy to lie concealed amongst the cattle; but the greatest part escaped up the main-shrouds and sheltered themselves either in the tops or rigging; and though the Indians attacked only the quarter-deck, yet the watch in the forecabin, finding their communication cut off, and being terrified by the wounds of the few who, not being killed on the spot, had strength sufficient to force their passage along the gangways, and not knowing either who their enemies were or what were their numbers, they likewise gave all over for lost, and in great confusion ran up into the rigging of the foremast and bowsprit.

Thus these eleven Indians, with a resolution perhaps without example, possessed themselves almost in an instant of the quarter-deck of a ship mounting sixty-six guns, with a crew of nearly five hundred men, and continued in peaceable possession of this post a considerable time; for the officers in the great cabin (amongst whom were Pizarro and Mindinuetta), the crew between decks, and those who had escaped into the tops and rigging, were only anxious for their own safety, and were for a long time incapable of forming any project for suppressing the insurrection and recovering the possession of the ship. It is true, the yells of the Indians, the groans of the wounded and the confused clamours of the crew, all heightened by the obscurity of the night, had at first greatly magnified their danger, and had filled them with the imaginary terrors which darkness, disorder, and an ignorance of the real strength of an enemy never fail to produce. For as the Spaniards were sensible of the disaffection of their pressed hands, and were also conscious of their barbarity to their prisoners, they imagined the conspiracy was general, and considered their own destruction as infallible; so that, it is said, some of them had once taken the resolution of leaping into the sea, but were prevented by their companions.

Page 12

However, when the Indians had entirely cleared the quarter-deck, the tumult in a great measure subsided; for those who had escaped were kept silent by their fears, and the Indians were incapable of pursuing them to renew the disorder. Orellana, when he saw himself master of the quarter-deck, broke open the arm chest, which, on a slight suspicion of mutiny, had been ordered there a few days before, as to a place of the greatest security. Here, he took it for granted, he should find cutlasses sufficient for himself and his companions, in the use of which weapon they were all extremely skilful, and with these, it was imagined, they proposed to have forced the great cabin; but on opening the chest there appeared nothing but firearms, which to them were of no use. There were indeed cutlasses in the chest, but they were hid by the firearms being laid over them. This was a sensible disappointment to them, and by this time Pizarro and his companions in the great cabin were capable of conversing aloud, through the cabin windows and port-holes, with those in the gun-room and between decks; and from hence they learned that the English (whom they principally suspected) were all safe below, and had not intermeddled in this mutiny; and by other particulars they at last discovered that none were concerned in it but Orellana and his people. On this Pizarro and the officers resolved to attack them on the quarter-deck, before any of the discontented on board should so far recover their first surprise as to reflect on the facility and certainty of seizing the ship by a junction with the Indians in the present emergency. With this view Pizarro got together what arms were in the cabin, and distributed them to those who were with him; but there were no other firearms to be met with but pistols, and for these they had neither powder nor ball. However, having now settled a correspondence with the gun room, they lowered down a bucket out of the cabin window, into which the gunner, out of one of the gun-room ports, put a quantity of pistol cartridges. When they had thus procured ammunition, and had loaded their pistols, they set the cabin door partly open, and fired some shot amongst the Indians on the quarter-deck, at first without effect. But at last Mindinuetta had the good fortune to shoot Orellana dead on the spot; on which his faithful companions, abandoning all thoughts of further resistance, instantly leaped into the sea, where they every man perished. Thus was this insurrection quelled, and the possession of the quarter-deck regained, after it had been full two hours in the power of this great and daring chief and his gallant and unhappy countrymen.

Pizarro, having escaped this imminent peril, steered for Europe, and arrived safe on the coast of Galicia* in the beginning of the year 1746, after having been absent between four and five years.

(Note. Galicia is the north-western province of Spain.)

CHAPTER 3. FROM MADEIRA TO ST. CATHERINE'S—UNHEALTHINESS OF THE SQUADRON.

Page 13

On the 3rd of November we weighed from Madeira.

On the 20th the captains of the squadron represented to the Commodore that their ships' companies were very sickly, and that it was their own opinion as well as their surgeons' that it would tend to the preservation of the men to let in more air between decks; but that their ships were so deep they could not possibly open their lower ports. On this representation the Commodore ordered six air-scuttles to be cut in each ship, in such places where they would least weaken it.

We crossed the Equinoctial, with a fine fresh gale at south-east on Friday, the 28th of November, at four in the morning, being then in the longitude of 27 degrees 59 minutes west from London.

On the 12th of December we spoke with a Portuguese brigantine from Rio de Janeiro, who informed us that we were sixty-four leagues from Cape St. Thomas, and forty leagues from Cape Frio.

Disease.

We now began to grow impatient for a sight of land, both for the recovery of our sick and for the refreshment and security of those who as yet continued healthier. When we departed from St. Helens, we were in so good a condition that we lost but two men on board the Centurion in our long passage to Madeira. But in this present run between Madeira and St. Catherine's we had been very sickly, so that many died, and great numbers were confined to their hammocks, both in our own ship and in the rest of the squadron; and several of these past all hopes of recovery. By our continuance at sea all our complaints were every day increasin, so that it was with great joy that we discovered the coast of Brazil on the 18th of December, at seven in the morning.

We moored at the island of St. Catherine's on Sunday, the 21st of December, the whole squadron being sickly and in great want of refreshments: both which inconveniences we hoped to have soon removed at this settlement, celebrated by former navigators for its healthiness and its provisions, and for the freedom, indulgence, and friendly assistance there given to the ships of all European nations in amity with the Crown of Portugal.

Our first care, after having moored our ships, was to send our sick men on shore. We sent about eighty sick from the Centurion, and the other ships I believe, sent nearly as many in proportion to the number of their hands. As soon as we had performed this necessary duty, we scraped our decks, and gave our ship a thorough cleansing; then smoked it between decks, and after all washed every part well with vinegar. Our next employment was wooding and watering our squadron, caulking our ships' sides and decks, overhauling our rigging, and securing our masts against the tempestuous

weather we were, in all probability, to meet with in our passage round Cape Horn in so advanced and inconvenient a season.

Page 14

In order to render the ships stiffer, and to enable them to carry more sail abroad, and to prevent their labouring in hard gales of wind, each captain had orders given him to strike down some of their great guns into the hold. These precautions being complied with, and each ship having taken in as much wood and water as there was room for, the whole squadron was ready for the sea; on which the tents on shore were struck, and all the sick were received on board. And here we had a melancholy proof how much the healthiness of this place had been overrated by former writers, for we found that though the Centurion alone had buried no less than twenty-eight men since our arrival, yet the number of our sick was in the same interval increased from eighty to ninety-six.

And now our crews being embarked, and everything prepared for our departure, the Commodore made a signal for all captains, and delivered them their orders, containing the successive places of rendezvous from hence to the coast of China. And then on the next day, being the 18th of January, 1741, the signal was made for weighing, and the squadron put to sea.

Chapter 4.

The commodore's instructions—bad weather—narrow escape of the Pearl—St Julian.

The last amicable port.

In leaving St. Catherine's, we left the last amicable port we proposed to touch at, and were now proceeding to a hostile, or at best a desert and inhospitable coast. And as we were to expect a more boisterous climate to the southward than any we had yet experienced, not only our danger of separation would by this means be much greater than it had been hitherto, but other accidents of a more pernicious nature were likewise to be apprehended, and as much as possible to be provided against. And therefore Mr. Anson, in appointing the various stations at which the ships of the squadron were to rendezvous, had considered that it was possible his own ship might be disabled from getting round Cape Horn, or might be lost; and had given proper directions that even in that case the expedition should not be abandoned. For the orders delivered to the captains the day before we sailed for St. Catherine's were that in case of separation—which they were with the utmost care to endeavour to avoid—the first place of rendezvous should be the Bay of Port St. Julian. If after a stay there of ten days, they were not joined by the Commodore, they were then to proceed through Straits le Maire round Cape Horn into the South Seas, where the next place of rendezvous was to be the island of Nuestra Senora del Socorro.* They were to bring this island to bear east-north-east, and to cruise from five to twelve leagues' distance from it, as long as their store of wood and water would permit, both which they were to expend with the utmost frugality. And when they were under an absolute

Page 15

necessity of a fresh supply, they were to stand in, and endeavour to find out an anchoring-place; and in case they could not, and the weather made it dangerous to supply their ships by standing off and on, they were then to make the best of their way to the island of Juan Fernandez. And as soon as they had recruited their wood and water, they were to continue cruising off the anchoring-place of that island for fifty-six days, in which time, if they were not joined by the Commodore, they might conclude that some accident had befallen him; and they were forthwith to put themselves under the command of the senior officer, who was to use his utmost endeavours to annoy the enemy both by sea and land. With these views their new Commodore was to continue in those seas as long as his provisions lasted, or as long as they were recruited by what he should take from the enemy, reserving only a sufficient quantity to carry him and the ships under his command to Macao at the entrance of the River Tigris, near Canton, on the coast of China, where, having supplied himself with a new stock of provisions he was thence without delay to make the best of his way to England.

(Note. Nuestra Senora del Socoro is one of the smaller outer islands of the Chonos Archipelago on the western coast of Patagonia.)

The next day we had very squally weather, attended with rain, lightning, and thunder; but it soon became fair again, with light breezes, and continued thus till Wednesday evening, when it blew fresh again; and increasing all night, by eight the next morning it became a most violent storm, and we had with it so thick a fog that it was impossible to see at the distance of two ships' lengths, so that the whole squadron disappeared.* On this a signal was made by firing guns, to bring to with the larboard tacks, the wind being then due east. We ourselves lay to under a reefed mizzen till noon, when the fog dispersed; and we soon discovered all the ships of the squadron, except the Pearl, which did not join us till near a month afterwards. The Trial sloop was a great way to leeward, having lost her mainmast in this squall, and having been obliged, for fear of bilging, to cut away the wreck. We bore down with the squadron to her relief, and the Gloucester was ordered to take her in tow, for the weather did not entirely abate until the day after, and even then a great swell continued from the eastward in consequence of the preceding storm.

(Note. i.e. from the sight of those on board the Centurion.)

A Ruse de GUERRE.

Page 16

On the 17th of February at five in the afternoon, we came to an anchor in the latitude of 48 degrees 58 minutes. Weighing again at five the next morning, we an hour afterwards discovered a sail upon which the Severn and Gloucester were both directed to give chase; but we soon perceived it to be the Pearl, which separated from us a few days after we left St. Catherine's; and on this we made a signal for the Severn to rejoin the squadron, leaving the Gloucester alone in the pursuit. And now we were surprised to see that, on the Gloucester's approach, the people on board the Pearl increased their sail and stood from her. However, the Gloucester came up with them, but found them with their hammocks in their nettings and everything ready for an engagement. At two in the afternoon the Pearl joined us, and running up under our stern, Lieutenant Salt hailed the Commodore, and acquainted him that Captain Kidd* died on the 31st of January. He likewise informed him that he had seen five large ships on the 10th instant, which he for some time imagined to be our squadron; that he suffered the commanding ship, which wore a red broad pennant exactly resembling that of the Commodore, at the main top-mast head, to come within gun-shot of him before he discovered his mistake; but then, finding it not to be the Centurion, he hauled close upon the wind, and crowded from them with all his sail, and standing across a rippling, where they hesitated to follow him, he happily escaped. He made them out to be five Spanish men-of-war, one of them exceedingly like the Gloucester, which was the occasion of his apprehensions when the Gloucester chased him. By their appearance he thought they consisted of two ships of 70 guns, two of 50, and one of 40 guns. The whole squadron continued in chase of him all that day, but at night, finding they could not get near him, they gave over the chase, and directed their course to the southward.

(Note. Captain Mitchel commanded the Pearl when the squadron started; but Captain Norris of the Gloucester had gone home sick from Madeira and several changes had taken place in the commands. The death of Captain Kidd caused fresh promotions. Captain Mitchel now commanded the Gloucester and Captain Murray the Pearl; while Lieutenants Cheap and Saunders had been promoted captains of the Wager and Trial.)

And now, had it not been for the necessity we were under of refitting the Trial, this piece of intelligence would have prevented our making any stay at St. Julian; but as it was impossible for that sloop to proceed round the Cape in the present condition, some stay there was inevitable; and, therefore, we sent the two cutters belonging to the Centurion and Severn in shore to discover the harbour of St. Julian, while the ships kept standing along the coast at about the distance of a league from the land. At six o'clock we anchored in the Bay of St. Julian. Soon after the cutters returned on board, having discovered the harbour, which did not appear to us in our situation, the northernmost point shutting in upon the southernmost, and in appearance closing the entrance.

Page 17

Being come to an anchor in this Bay of St. Julian, principally with a view of refitting the Trial, the carpenters were immediately employed in that business, and continued so during our whole stay at the place. Here the Commodore, too, in order to ease the expedition of all unnecessary expense, held a consultation with his captains about unloading and discharging the Anna pink;* but they represented to him that they were so far from being in a condition of taking any part of her loading on board that they had still great quantities of provisions in the way of their guns between decks, and that their ships were withal so very deep that they were not fit for action without being cleared. This put the Commodore under the necessity of retaining the pink in the service; and as it was apprehended we should certainly meet with the Spanish squadron in passing the Cape, Mr. Anson thought it advisable to give orders to the captains to put all their provisions which were in the way of their guns on board the Anna pink, and to remount such of their guns as had formerly for the ease of their ships been ordered into the hold.

(Note. The Industry pink had been unloaded and discharged on November 19th.)

CHAPTER 5. FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS—TIERRA DEL FUEGO—THE STRAITS OF LE MAIRE.

A COUNCIL OF WAR.

The Trial being nearly refitted, which was our principal occupation at this Bay of ST. Julian, and the sole occasion of our stay, the Commodore thought it necessary, as we were now directly bound for the South Seas and the enemy's coasts, to regulate the plan of his future operations. And therefore, on the 24th of February, a signal was made for all captains, and a council of war was held on board the Centurion. At this council Mr. Anson proposed that their first attempt, after their arrival in the South Seas, should be the attack of the town and harbour of Baldivia, the principal frontier place of the district of Chile. To this proposition made by the Commodore the council unanimously and readily agreed; and in consequence of this resolution instructions were given to the captains of the squadron, by which they were directed in case of separation to make the best of their way to the island of Nuestra Senora del Socoro, and to cruise off that island ten days; from whence, if not joined by the Commodore, they were to proceed and cruise off the harbour of Baldivia, making the land between the latitudes of 40 degrees and 40 degrees 30 minutes, and taking care to keep to the southward of the port; and if in fourteen days they were not joined by the rest of the squadron, they were then to quit this station, and to direct their course to the island of Juan Fernandez, after which they were to regulate their further proceedings by their former orders. And as separation of the squadron might prove of the utmost prejudice to His Majesty's service, each captain was ordered to give it in charge to the respective officers of the watch not to keep their ship at a greater distance from the Centurion than two miles, as they would answer it at their peril; and if any captain should find his ship beyond the distance specified, he was to acquaint the Commodore with the name of the officer who had thus neglected his duty.

Page 18

These necessary regulations being established, and the Trial sloop completed, the squadron weighed on Friday, the 27th of February, at seven in the morning, and stood to sea.

From our departure from St. Julian to the 4th of March we had little wind, with thick, hazy weather and some rain. On the 4th of March we were in sight of Cape Virgin Mary,* and not more than six or seven leagues distant from it. The afternoon of this day was very bright and clear, with small breezes of wind, inclinable to a calm; and most of the captains took the opportunity of this favourable weather to pay a visit to the Commodore.

(Note. Cape de las Virgenes, the south-eastern extremity of Patagonia at the entrance to the straits of Magellan.)

We here found, what was constantly verified by all our observations in these high latitudes,* that fair weather was always of an exceeding short duration, and that when it was remarkably fine it was a certain presage of a succeeding storm; for the calm and sunshine of our afternoon ended in a most turbulent night, the wind freshening from the south-west as the night came on, and increasing its violence continually till nine in the morning the next day, when it blew so hard that we were obliged to bring to with the squadron, and to continue under a reefed mizzen till eleven at night. Towards midnight, the wind abating, we made sail again; and steering south, we discovered in the morning for the first time the land called Tierra del Fuego. This indeed afforded us but a very uncomfortable prospect, it appearing of a stupendous height, covered everywhere with snow. As we intended to pass through Straits le Maire next day, we lay to at night that we might not over shoot them, and took this opportunity to prepare ourselves for the tempestuous climate we were soon to be engaged in; with which view we employed ourselves good part of the night in bending an entire new suit of sails to the yards. At four the next morning, being the 7th of March, we made sail, and at eight saw the land, and soon after we began to open the Straits.

THE EVE OF DISASTER.

About ten o'clock, the Pearl and the Trial being ordered to keep ahead of the squadron, we entered them with fair weather and a brisk gale, and were hurried through by the rapidity of the tide in about two hours, though they are between seven and eight leagues in length. As these Straits are often considered as the boundary between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and as we presumed we had nothing now before us but an open sea till we arrived on those opulent coasts where all our hopes and wishes centred, we could not help flattering ourselves that the greatest difficulty of our passage was now at an end, and that our most sanguine dreams were upon the point of being realised, and hence we indulged our imaginations in those romantic schemes which the fancied possession of the Chilean gold and Peruvian silver might be conceived

Page 19

to inspire. These joyous ideas were heightened by the brightness of the sky and the serenity of the weather, which was indeed most remarkably pleasing; for though the winter was now advancing apace, yet the morning of this day, in its brilliancy and mildness, gave place to none we had seen since our departure from England. Thus animated by these delusions, we traversed these memorable Straits, ignorant of the dreadful calamities that were then impending, and just ready to break upon us; ignorant that the time drew near when the squadron would be separated never to unite again, and that this day of our passage was the last cheerful day that the greatest part of us would ever live to enjoy.

(Note. The Equator is the zero (0 degrees) of latitude. The latitude becomes higher as one proceeds to the poles (90 degrees).)

CHAPTER 6. HEAVY GALES—A LONG BATTLE WITH WIND AND SEA—THE CENTURION LOSES HER CONSORTS.

We had scarcely reached the southern extremity of the straits of le Maire, when our flattering hopes were instantly lost in the apprehensions of immediate destruction. For before the sternmost ships of the squadron were clear of the Straits, the serenity of the sky was suddenly changed, and gave us all the presages of an impending storm; and immediately the wind shifted to the southward, and blew in such violent squalls that we were obliged to hand our topsails and reef our mainsail. The tide, too, which had hitherto favoured us, now turned against us and drove us to the eastward with prodigious rapidity, so that we were in great anxiety for the Wager and the Anna pink, the two sternmost vessels, fearing they would be dashed to pieces against the shore of Staten Land. Nor were our apprehensions without foundation, for it was with the utmost difficulty they escaped. And now the whole squadron, instead of pursuing their intended course to the south-west, were driven to the eastward by the united force of the storm and of the currents; so that next day in the morning we found ourselves near seven leagues to the eastward of Staten Land. The violence of the current, which had set us with so much precipitation to the eastward, together with the force and constancy of the westerly winds, soon taught us to consider the doubling of Cape Horn as an enterprise that might prove too mighty for our efforts, though some amongst us had lately treated the difficulties which former voyagers were said to have met with in this undertaking as little better than chimerical, and had supposed them to arise rather from timidity and unskilfulness than from the real embarrassments of the winds and seas. But we were severely convinced that these censures were rash and ill-grounded, for the distresses with which we struggled during the three succeeding months will not easily be paralleled in the relation of any former naval expedition.

Page 20

From the storm which came on before we had well got clear of Straits le Maire, we had a continual succession of such tempestuous weather as surprised the oldest and most experienced mariners on board, and obliged them to confess that what they had hitherto called storms were inconsiderable gales compared with the violence of these winds, which raised such short and at the same time such mountainous waves as greatly surpassed in danger all seas known in any other part of the globe. And it was not without great reason that this unusual appearance filled us with continual terror, for had any one of these waves broke fairly over us, it must in all probability have sent us to the bottom.

SEAS MOUNTAINS HIGH.

It was on the 7th of March, as has been already observed, that we passed Straits le Maire, and were immediately afterwards driven to the eastward by a violent storm and the force of the current which set that way. For the four or five succeeding days we had hard gales of wind from the same quarter, with a most prodigious swell; so that though we stood, during all that time, towards the south-west, yet we had no reason to imagine we had made any way to the westward. In this interval we had frequent squalls of rain and snow, and shipped great quantities of water; after which for three or four days, though the seas ran mountains high, yet the weather was rather more moderate. But on the 18th we had again strong gales of wind with extreme cold. From hence to the 23rd the weather was more favourable, though often intermixed with rain and sleet, and some hard gales; but as the waves did not subside, the ship, by labouring in this lofty sea, was now grown so loose in her upper works that she let in the water at every seam; so that every part within board was constantly exposed to the sea-water, and scarcely any of the officers ever lay in dry beds. Indeed, it was very rare that two nights ever passed without many of them being driven from their beds by the deluge of water that came upon them.

On the 23rd we had a most violent storm of wind, hail, and rain, with a very great sea; and though we handed the main-topsail before the height of the squall, yet we found the yard sprung; and soon after, the foot-rope of the mainsail breaking, the mainsail itself split instantly to rags, and in spite of our endeavours to save it, much the greater part of it was blown overboard. On this the Commodore made the signal for the squadron to bring to; and, the storm at length flattening to a calm, we had an opportunity of getting down our main-topsail yard to put the carpenters at work upon it, and of repairing our rigging; after which, having bent a new mainsail, we got under sail again with a moderate breeze. But in less than twenty-four hours we were attacked by another storm still more furious than the former; for it proved a perfect hurricane, and reduced us to the necessity of lying to under our bare poles.

Page 21

As our ship kept the wind better any of the rest, we were obliged in the afternoon to wear ship, in order to join the squadron to the leeward, which otherwise we should have been in danger of losing in the night; and as we dared not venture any sail abroad, we were obliged to make use of an expedient which answered our purpose; this was putting the helm a-weather and manning the fore-shrouds. But though this method proved successful for the end intended, yet in the execution of it one of our ablest seaman was canted overboard; and notwithstanding the prodigious agitation of the waves, we perceived that he swam very strong, and it was with the utmost concern that we found ourselves incapable of assisting him; and we were the more grieved at his unhappy fate, since we lost sight of him struggling with the waves, and conceived from the manner in which he swam that he might continue sensible for a considerable time longer of the horror attending his irretrievable situation.

It was this incident that inspired Cowper's 'Castaway,' and called forth the touching verse given below—a verse so eloquent in its testimony to that gentler side of Anson's nature, which won for him the affection and regard not only of his own sailors, but even of his Spanish prisoners.

Of this poor sailor, and of the page in the ship's books that bore his name, Cowper wrote:

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalise the dead.

From hence we had an interval of three or four days less tempestuous than usual, but accompanied with a thick fog, in which we were obliged to fire guns almost every half-hour to keep our squadron together.

On the first of April the weather returned again to its customary bias, the sky looked dark and gloomy, and the wind began to freshen and to blow in squalls; however, it was not yet so boisterous as to prevent our carrying our topsails close reefed; but its appearance was such as plainly prognosticated that a still severer tempest was at hand. And accordingly, on the 3rd of April, there came on a storm which both in its violence and continuation (for it lasted three days) exceeded all that we had hitherto encountered. In its first onset we received a furious shock from the sea which broke upon our larboard quarter, where it stove in the quarter gallery, and rushed into the ship like a deluge; our rigging, too, suffered extremely, so that to ease the stress upon the masts and shrouds we lowered both our main and fore yards, and furled all our sails, and in this posture we lay to for three days, when, the storm somewhat abating, we ventured to make sail under our courses only. But even this we could not do long, for

the next day, which was the 7th, we had another hard gale of wind, with lightning and rain, which obliged us to lie to again all night.

Page 22

And now, after all our solicitude, and the numerous ills of every kind to which we had been incessantly exposed for near forty days, we had great consolation in the flattering hopes we entertained, that our fatigues were drawing to a period, and that we should soon arrive in a more hospitable climate, where we should be amply repaid for all our past sufferings. For, towards the latter end of March, we were advanced by our reckoning near 10 degrees to the westward of the westernmost point of Tierra del Fuego, and this allowance being double what former navigators have thought necessary to be taken in order to compensate the drift of the eastern current, we esteemed ourselves to be well advanced within the limits of the southern ocean, and had therefore been ever since standing to the northward with as much expedition as the turbulence of the weather and our frequent disasters permitted. And, on the 13th of April, we were but a degree in latitude to the southward of the west entrance of the straits of Magellan, so that we fully expected, in a very few days, to have experienced the celebrated tranquillity of the Pacific Ocean.

AN UNEXPECTED DANGER.

But these were delusions which only served to render our disappointment more terrible; for the next morning, between one and two, as we were standing to the northward, and the weather, which had till then been hazy, accidentally cleared up, the pink made a signal for seeing land right ahead and it being but two miles distant, we were all under the most dreadful apprehensions of running on shore; which, had either the wind blown from its usual quarter with its wonted vigour, or had not the moon suddenly shone out, not a ship amongst us could possibly have avoided. But the wind, which some few hours before blew in squalls from the south-west, having fortunately shifted to west-north-west, we were enabled to stand to the southward, and to clear ourselves of this unexpected danger; so that by noon we had gained an offing of near twenty leagues.

By the latitude of this land we fell in with, it was agreed to be a part of Tierra del Fuego, near the southern outlet of the Straits of Magellan. It was indeed most wonderful that the currents should have driven us to the eastward with such strength; for the whole squadron esteemed themselves upwards of ten degrees more westerly than this land. And now, instead of having our labours and anxieties relieved by approaching a warmer climate and more tranquil seas, we were to steer again to the southward, and again to combat those western blasts which had so often terrified us; and this, too, when we were weakened by our men falling sick and dying apace, and when our spirits, dejected by a long continuance at sea, and by our late disappointment, were much less capable of supporting us in the various difficulties which we could not but expect in this new undertaking. Add to all this, too, the discouragement we received by the diminution of the strength of the squadron; for three days before this we lost sight of the *Severn* and the *Pearl* in the morning; and though we spread our ships, and beat about for some time, yet we never saw them more; whence we had apprehensions that they too might have fallen in with this land in the night, and, being less favoured by the wind and the moon than we were, might have run on shore and have perished.

Page 23

After the mortifying disappointment of falling in with the coast of Tierra del Fuego, when we esteemed ourselves 10 degrees to the westward of it, we stood away to the south-west till the 22nd of April, when we were in upwards of 60 degrees south, and by our account near 6 degrees to the westward of Cape Noir.* And in this run we had a series of as favourable weather as could well be expected in that part of the world, even in a better season; so that this interval, setting the inquietude of our thoughts aside, was by far the most eligible of any we enjoyed from Straits le Maire to the west coast of America. This moderate weather continued with little variation till the 24th; but on the 24th in the evening the wind began to blow fresh, and soon increased to a prodigious storm; and the weather being extremely thick, about midnight we lost sight of the other ships of the squadron, which, notwithstanding the violence of the preceding storms, had hitherto kept in company with us.

(Note. Part of Tierra del Fuego near the southern outlet of the Straits of Magellan.)

On the 25th, about noon, the weather became more moderate, but still we had no sight of the rest of the squadron, nor indeed were we joined by any of them again till after our arrival at Juan Fernandez, nor did any two of them, as we have since learned, continue in company together.

The remaining part of this month of April we had generally hard gales, although we had been every day since the 22nd edging to the northward. However, on the last day of the month we flattered ourselves with the hopes of soon terminating all our sufferings, for we that day found ourselves in the latitude of 52 degrees 13 minutes, which, being to the northward of the Straits of Magellan we were assured that we had completed our passage, and had arrived in the confines of the Southern Ocean; and this ocean being nominated Pacific,* from the equability of the seasons which are said to prevail there, and the facility and security with which navigation is there carried on, we doubted not but we should be speedily cheered with the moderate gales, the smooth water, and the temperate air, for which that tract of the globe has been so renowned. And under the influence of these pleasing circumstances we hoped to experience some kind of compensation for the complicated miseries which had so constantly attended us for the last eight weeks. But here we were again disappointed; for in the succeeding month of May our sufferings rose to a much higher pitch than they had ever yet done, whether we consider the violence of the storms, the shattering of our sails and rigging, or the diminishing and weakening of our crew by deaths and sickness, and the probable prospect of our total destruction.

(Note. Peace-making. So named by Magellan from the fine weather he experienced there in 1520 and 1521. He was the first European to enter that ocean. The name was scarcely deserved.)

Page 24

CHAPTER 7. OUTBREAK OF SCURVY*—DANGER OF SHIPWRECK.

(Note. 'Scurvy.' The nature of the disease and the proper method of treatment were not fully understood in Anson's day. It is caused by improper diet and particularly by the want of fresh vegetables. Lemon and lime juice are the best protectives against it and they were made an essential element in nautical diet in 1795. The disease which used to cause dreadful mortality on long voyages has since that time gradually disappeared and is now very rarely met with.)

THE PACIFIC.

Soon after our passing Straits le Maire the scurvy began to make its appearance amongst us; and our long continuance at sea, the fatigue we underwent, and the various disappointments we met with, had occasion its spreading to such a degree, that at the latter end of April there were but few on board who were not in some degree afflicted with it; and in that month no less than forty-three died of it on board the Centurion. But though we thought that the distemper had then risen to an extraordinary height, and were willing to hope that as we advanced to the northward its malignant would abate, yet we found, on the contrary, that in the month of May we lost nearly double that number. And as we did not get to land till the middle of June, the mortality went on increasing, and the disease extended itself so prodigiously that after the loss of above two hundred men we could not at last muster more than six foremast men in a watch capable of duty.

This disease, so frequently attending all long voyages, and so particularly destructive to us, is usually attended with a strange dejection of the spirits, and with shiverings, tremblings, and a disposition to be seized with the most dreadful terrors on the slightest accident. Indeed, it was most remarkable, in all our reiterated experience of this malady, that whatever discouraged our people, or at any time damped their hopes, never failed to add new vigour to the distemper, for it usually killed those who were in the last stage of it, and confined those to their hammocks who were before capable of some kind of duty; so that it seemed as if alacrity of mind and sanguine thoughts were no contemptible preservatives from its fatal malignity.

A most extraordinary circumstance, and what would be scarcely credible upon any single evidence, is, that the scars of wounds which had been for many years healed were forced open again by this virulent distemper. Of this there was a remarkable instance in one of the invalids on board the Centurion, who had been wounded above fifty years before at the battle of the Boyne;* for though he was cured soon after, and had continued well for a great number of years past, yet, on his being attacked by the scurvy, his wounds, in the progress of his disease, broke out afresh, and appeared as if they had never been healed. Nay, what is still more astonishing, the callous of a broken

Page 25

bone, which had been completely formed for a long time, was found to be hereby dissolved, and the fracture seemed as if it had never been consolidated. Indeed, the effects of this disease were in almost every instance wonderful; for many of our people, though confined to their hammocks, appeared to have no inconsiderable share of health, for they ate and drank heartily, were cheerful, and talked with much seeming vigour, and with a loud, strong tone of voice; and yet on their being the least moved, though it was only from one part of the ship to the other, and that in their hammocks, they have immediately expired; and others who have confided in their seeming strength, and have resolved to get out of their hammocks, have died before they could well reach the deck. And it was no uncommon thing for those who were able to walk the deck, and to do some kind of duty, to drop down dead in an instant, on any endeavours to act with their utmost vigour, many of our people having perished in this manner during the course of this voyage.

(Note. William III defeated James II and his army of Irish and French troops July 12th, 1690.)

THE ISLAND OF SOCORO.

With this terrible disease we struggled the greatest part of the time of our beating round Cape Horn. We entertained hopes that when we should have once secured our passage round the Cape, we should put a period to this and all the other evils which had so constantly pursued us. But it was our misfortune to find that the Pacific Ocean was to us less hospitable than the turbulent neighbourhood of Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn; for being arrived, on the 8th of May, off the island of Socoro, which was the first rendezvous appointed for the squadron, and where we hoped to have met with some of our companions, we cruised for them in that station several days. And here we were not only disappointed in our hopes of being joined by our friends, and thereby induced to favour the gloomy suggestions of their having all perished, but we were likewise perpetually alarmed with the fears of being driven on shore upon this coast, which appeared too craggy and irregular to give us the least hopes that in such a case any of us could possibly escape immediate destruction. For the land had indeed a most tremendous aspect; the most distant part of it, and which appeared far within the country, being the mountains usually called the Andes or Cordilleras, was extremely high, and covered with snow; and the coast itself seemed quite rocky and barren, and the water's edge skirted with precipices. As we were utterly ignorant of the coast, had we been driven ashore by the western winds, which blew almost constantly there, we did not expect to have avoided the loss of our ship and of our lives.

And this continued peril, which lasted for about a fortnight, was greatly aggravated by the difficulties we found in working the ship; as the scurvy had by this time destroyed so great a part of our hands, and had in some degree affected almost the whole crew. Nor

did we, as we hoped, find the winds less violent as we advanced to the northward; for we had often prodigious squalls, which split our sails, greatly damaged our rigging, and endangered our masts.

Page 26

CHAPTER 8. JUAN FERNANDEZ—THE TRIAL REJOINS.

THE SEARCH FOR JUAN FERNANDEZ.

It were endless to recite minutely the various disasters, fatigues, and terrors which we encountered on this coast; all these went on increasing till the 22nd of May, at which time the fury of all the storms which we had hitherto encountered seemed to be combined, and to have conspired our destruction. In this hurricane almost all our sails were split, and great part of our standing rigging broken; and, about eight in the evening, a mountainous overgrown sea took us upon our starboard quarter, and gave us so prodigious a shock that several of our shrouds broke with the jerk, by which our masts were greatly endangered. Our ballast and stores, too, were so strangely shifted that the ship heeled afterwards two streaks to port. Indeed, it was a most tremendous blow, and we were thrown into the utmost consternation from the apprehension of instantly foundering. This was the last effort of that stormy climate, for in a day or two we found the weather more moderate than we had yet experienced since our passing Straits le Maire. And now having cruised in vain for more than a fortnight in quest of the other ships of the squadron, it was resolved to take advantage of the present favourable season and the offing we had made from this terrible coast, and to make the best of our way for the island of Juan Fernandez.* For though our next rendezvous was appointed off the harbour of Baldivia, yet as we had hitherto seen none of our companions at this first rendezvous, it was not to be supposed that any of them would be found at the second; indeed, we had the greatest reason to suspect that all but ourselves had perished. Besides, we were by this time reduced to so low a condition that, instead of attempting to attack the places of the enemy, our utmost hopes could only suggest to us the possibility of saving the ship, and some part of the remaining enfeebled crew, by our speedy arrival at Juan Fernandez; for this was the only road in that part of the world where there was any probability of our recovering our sick or refitting our vessel, and consequently our getting thither was the only chance we had left to avoid perishing at sea.

(Note. 'Juan Fernandez.' This island which is 13 miles long by 4 miles broad, now belongs to Chili. It was discovered in 1563 by Juan Fernandez. As it was unoccupied it was a favourite resort of the buccaneers throughout the seventeenth century, as well as of English squadrons despatched like those of Dampier and Anson, to prey on Spanish commerce, and needing to refit and water after the long voyage round Cape Horn. The Spaniards at last occupied it in 1750, in self-defence. It was here that Alexander Selkirk was put ashore in 1704.)

Page 27

Our deplorable situation, then, allowing no room for deliberation, we stood for the island of Juan Fernandez. On the 28th of May, being nearly in the parallel upon which it is laid down, we had great expectations of seeing it; but not finding it in the position in which the charts had taught us to expect it, we began to fear that we had got too far to the westward; and therefore, though the Commodore himself was strongly persuaded that he saw it on the morning of the 28th, yet his officers believing it to be only a cloud, to which opinion the haziness of the weather gave some kind of countenance, it was on a consultation resolved to stand to the eastward in the parallel of the island; as it was certain that by this course we should either fall in with the island, if we were already to the westward of it, or should at least make the mainland of Chili, whence we might take a new departure, and assure ourselves, by running to the westward afterwards, of not missing the island a second time.

On the 30th of May we had a view of the continent of Chili, distant about twelve or thirteen leagues. It gave us great uneasiness to find that we had so needlessly altered our course when we were, in all probability, just upon the point of making the island; for the mortality amongst us was now increased to a most dreadful degree, and those who remained alive were utterly dispirited by this new disappointment and the prospect of their longer continuance at sea. Our water, too, began to grow scarce, so that a general dejection prevailed amongst us, which added much to the virulence of the disease, and destroyed numbers of our best men; and to all these calamities there was added this vexatious circumstance that when, after having got sight of the main, we tacked and stood to the westward in quest of the island, we were so much delayed by calms and contrary winds that it cost us nine days to regain the westing which, when we stood to the eastward, we ran down in two. In this desponding condition, with a crazy ship, a great scarcity of water, and a crew so universally diseased that there were not above ten foremast men in a watch capable of doing duty, and even some of these lame and unable to go aloft; under these disheartening circumstances, I say, we stood to the westward; and on the 9th of June, at daybreak, we at last discovered the long-wished-for island of Juan Fernandez.

It appeared to be a mountainous place, extremely ragged and irregular; yet as it was land and, the land we sought for, it was to us a most agreeable sight. For at this place only we could hope to put a period to those terrible calamities we had so long struggled with, which had already swept away above half our crew, and which, had we continued a few days longer at sea, would inevitably have completed our destruction. For we were by this time reduced to so helpless a condition, that out of two hundred and odd men who remained alive, we could not, taking all our watches together, muster hands enough to work the ship on an emergency, though we included the officers, their servants, and the boys.

Page 28

The wind being northerly when we first made the island, we kept plying all that day and the next night, in order to get in with the land; and wearing the ship in the middle watch, we had a melancholy instance of the most incredible debility of our people; for the lieutenant could muster no more than two quarter-masters and six foremast men capable of working; so that without the assistance of the officers, servants, and boys, it might have proved impossible for us to have reached the island after we had got sight of it; and even with this assistance they were two hours in trimming the sails. To so wretched a condition was a 60-gun ship reduced, which had passed Straits le Maire but three months before, with between four hundred and five hundred men, almost all of them in health and vigour.

EVEN GRASS A DAINTY.

However, on the 10th, in the afternoon, we got under the lee of the island, and kept ranging along it at about two miles' distance, in order to look out for the proper anchorage, which was described to be in a bay on the north side. But at last the night closed upon us before we had satisfied ourselves which was the proper bay to anchor in, and therefore we resolved to send our boat next morning to discover the road. At four in the morning the cutter was despatched with our third lieutenant to find out the bay we were in search of, who returned again at noon with the boat laden with seals and grass; for though the island abounded with better vegetables, yet the boat's crew, in their short stay, had not met with them; and they well knew that even grass would prove a dainty, and, indeed, it was all soon and eagerly devoured. The seals, too, were considered as fresh provision, but as yet were not much admired, though they grew afterwards into more repute; for what rendered them less valuable at this juncture was the prodigious quantity of excellent fish which the people on board had taken during the absence of the boat.

The cutter, in this expedition, had discovered the bay where we intended to anchor, which we found was to the westward of our present station; and the next morning we steered along shore till we came abreast of the point that forms the eastern part of the bay. On opening the bay, the wind, that had befriended us thus far, shifted, and blew from thence in squalls; but by means of the headway we had got, we luffed close in, till the anchor brought us up in fifty-six fathoms. Soon after we had thus got to our new berth, we discovered a sail, which we made no doubt was one of our squadron; and on its nearer approach, we found it to be the Trial sloop. We immediately sent some of our hands on board her, by whose assistance she was brought to an anchor between us and the land. We soon found that the sloop had not been exempted from those calamities which we had so severely felt; for her commander, Captain Saunders, waiting on the Commodore, informed him that out of his small complement he had buried thirty-four of his men; and those that remained were so universally afflicted with the scurvy that only himself, his lieutenant, and three of his men were able to stand by the sails.

Page 29

CHAPTER 9. THE SICK LANDED—ALEXANDER SELKIRK*—SEALS AND SEA-LIONS.

(Note. Alexander Selkirk (1676 to 1721) was an adventurous sailor who joined Dampier's privateering expedition to the South Seas in 1703. He quarrelled with his captain, Stradling, and requested to be landed on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez. He immediately repented of his request, and begged to be taken off; but his prayers were disregarded, and he remained on the island from September, 1704, until he was picked up in 1709 by Dampier's new expedition. An account of his adventures was published, which apparently gave Defoe his idea of Robinson Crusoe.)

We were now extremely occupied in sending on shore materials to raise tents for the reception of the sick, who died apace on board. But we had not hands enough to prepare the tents for their reception before the 16th. On that and the two following days we sent them all on shore, amounting to a hundred and sixty-seven persons, besides at least a dozen who died in the boats on their being exposed to the fresh air. The greatest part of our sick were so infirm that we were obliged to carry them out of the ship in their hammocks, and to convey them afterwards in the same manner from the waterside to their tents, over a stony beach. This was a work of considerable fatigue to the few who were healthy; and therefore the Commodore, with his accustomed humanity, not only assisted herein with his own labour, but obliged his officers, without distinction, to give their helping hand.

The excellence of the climate and the looseness of the soil render this place extremely proper for all kinds of vegetation; for if the ground be anywhere accidentally turned up, it is immediately overgrown with turnips and Sicilian radishes; and therefore, Mr. Anson having with him garden seeds of all kinds, and stones of different sorts of fruits, he, for the better accommodation of his countrymen who should hereafter touch here, sowed both lettuces, carrots, and other garden plants, and set in the woods a great variety of plum, apricot, and peach stones. And these last, he has been informed, have since thriven to a very remarkable degree; for some gentlemen, who in their passage from Lima to old Spain were taken and brought to England, having procured leave to wait upon Mr. Anson to thank him for his generosity and humanity to his prisoners, some of whom were their relations, they in casual discourse with him about his transactions in the South Seas, particularly asked him if he had not planted a great number of fruit-stones on the island of Juan Fernandez; for they told him their late navigators had discovered there numbers of peach trees and apricot trees, which being fruits before unobserved in that place, they concluded them to be produced from kernels set by him.

ALEXANDER SELKIRK.

Page 30

Former writers have related that this island abounded with vast numbers of goats; and their accounts are not to be questioned, this place being the usual haunt of the buccaneers* and privateers who formerly frequented those seas. And there are two instances—one of a Mosquito Indian, and the other of Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, who were left by their respective ships, and lived alone upon this island for some years, and consequently were no strangers to its produce. Selkirk, who was the last, after a stay of between four and five years, was taken off the place by the Duke and Duchess privateers, of Bristol, as may be seen at large in the journal of their voyage. His manner of life during his solitude was in most particulars very remarkable; but there is one circumstance he relates which was so strangely verified by our own observation that I cannot help reciting it. He tells us, among other things, as he often caught more goats than he wanted, he sometimes marked their ears and let them go. This was about thirty-two years before our arrival at the island. Now it happened that the first goat that was killed by our people at their landing had his ears slit; whence we concluded that he had doubtless been formerly under the power of Selkirk. This was indeed an animal of a most venerable aspect, dignified with an exceeding majestic beard, and with many other symptoms of antiquity. During our stay on the island we met with others marked in the same manner, all the males being distinguished by an exuberance of beard and every other characteristic of extreme age. But the great numbers of goats, which former writers described to have been found upon this island, are at present very much diminished. For the Spaniards being informed of the advantages which the buccaneers and privateers drew from the provisions which goats' flesh here furnished them with, they have endeavoured to extirpate the breed, thereby to deprive their enemies of this relief. For this purpose they have put on shore great numbers of large dogs, who have increased apace, and have destroyed all the goats in the accessible part of the country; so that there now remain only a few among the crags and precipices where the dogs cannot follow them.

(Note. 'The buccaneers.' The name "buccaneer" originally meant one who dried or smoked flesh on a "boucan," a kind of hurdle used for this purpose by the natives of Central and South America. The English, French, and Dutch smugglers who, in spite of the monopoly so jealously guarded by the Spaniards (see Introduction above) traded in the Caribbean seas, used to provision at St. Domingo largely with beef, jerked or sun-dried on the boucans. These men formed an organised body, under a chief chosen by themselves, and, under the name of the buccaneers, were for three-quarters of a century the terror of the Spaniards. In 1655 they were powerful enough to give material assistance to the English fleet which conquered Jamaica.

Page 31

In 1671 they raised a force of 2,000 men, marched across the isthmus, and besieged and took Panama; their success, as usual, being marked by horrible atrocities. In 1685 a Spanish fleet of fourteen sail, which had been fitted out to put them down, found ten buccaneer ships in the bay of Panama, but dared not give them battle. The war between France and England after 1688 dissolved the alliance between the French and English buccaneers; and the last conspicuous event in their history was the capture of Cartagena in 1697. Soon after this date they disappeared as an organised body, though for many years members of the band remained as pirates in the South Seas.)

Goats' flesh being scarce, we rarely being able to kill above one a day, and our people growing tired of fish (which abounds at this place), they at last condescended to eat seals, which by degrees they came to relish, and called it lamb. But there is another amphibious creature to be met with here, called a sea-lion, that bears some resemblance to a seal, though it is much larger. This, too, we ate, under the denomination of beef. In general there was no difficulty in killing them, for they were incapable either of escaping or resisting, their motion being the most unwieldy that can be conceived, their blubber, all the time they were moving, being agitated in large waves under their skins. However, a sailor one day being carelessly employed in skinning a young sea-lion, the female from which he had taken it came upon him unperceived, and getting his head in her mouth, she with her teeth scored his skull in notches in many places, and thereby wounded him so desperately that though all possible care was taken of him, he died in a few days.

CHAPTER 10.

REAPPEARANCE OF THE GLOUCESTER—DISTRESS ON BOARD—HER EFFORTS TO

ENTER THE BAY.

The arrival of the Trial sloop at this island so soon after we came there ourselves gave us great hopes of being speedily joined by the rest of the squadron; and we were for some days continually looking out in expectation of their coming in sight. But near a fortnight being elapsed without any of them having appeared, we began to despair of ever meeting them again.

RETURN OF THE GLOUCESTER.

But on the 21st of June some of our people, from an eminence on shore, discerned a ship to leeward, with her courses even with the horizon. However, after viewing her for a short time, the weather grew thick and hazy, and they lost sight of her. On the 26th, towards noon, we discerned a sail in the north-east quarter, which we conceived to be the very same ship that had been seen before, and our conjectures proved true; and about one o'clock she approached so near that we could distinguish her to be the

Gloucester. As we had no doubt of her being in great distress, the Commodore immediately ordered his boat to her assistance, laden with fresh water, fish, and vegetables, which was a very seasonable relief to them; for perhaps

Page 32

there never was a crew in a more distressed situation. They had already thrown overboard two-thirds of their complement, and of those that remained alive scarcely any were capable of doing duty except the officers and their servants. They had been a considerable time at the small allowance of a pint of fresh water to each man for twenty-four hours, and yet they had so little left that, had it not been for the supply we sent them, they must soon have died of thirst.

The ship plied in within three miles of the bay, but, the winds and currents being contrary, she could not reach the road. However she continued in the offing the next day, but had no chance of coming to an anchor unless the wind and current shifted; and therefore the Commodore repeated his assistance, sending to her the Trial's boat manned with the Centurion's people, and a further supply of water and other refreshments. Captain Mitchel, the captain of the Gloucester, was under a necessity of detaining both this boat and that sent the preceding day; for without the help of their crews he had no longer strength enough to navigate the ship. In this tantalising situation the Gloucester continued for near a fortnight, without being able to fetch the road, though frequently attempting it, and at some times bidding very fair for it. On the 9th of July we observed her stretching away to the eastward at a considerable distance, which we supposed was with a design to get to the southward of the island; but as we soon lost sight of her and she did not appear for near a week, we were prodigiously concerned, knowing that she must be again in extreme distress for want of water. After great impatience about her, we discovered her again on the 16th, endeavouring to come round the eastern point of the island; but the wind, still blowing directly from the bay, prevented her getting nearer than within four leagues of the land. On this captain Mitchel made signals of distress, and our long-boat was sent to him with a store of water and plenty of fish and other refreshments; and the long-boat being not to be spared, the coxswain had positive orders from the Commodore to return again immediately; but the weather proving stormy the next day, and the boat not appearing, we much feared she was lost, which would have proved an irretrievable misfortune to us all. But the third day after we were relieved from this anxiety by the joyful sight of the long-boat's sails upon the water, and we sent the cutter immediately to her assistance, which towed her alongside in a few hours. The crew of our long-boat had taken in six of the Gloucester's sick men to bring them on shore, two of whom had died in the boat. And now we learned that the Gloucester was in a most dreadful condition, having scarcely a man in health on board, except those they received from us; and numbers of their sick dying daily, we found that, had it not been for the last supply sent by our long-boat, both the healthy and diseased must

Page 33

have all perished together for want of water. And these calamities were the more terrifying, as they appeared to be without remedy, for the Gloucester had already spent a month in her endeavours to fetch the bay, and she was now no farther advanced than at the first moment she made the island; on the contrary, the people on board her had worn out all their hopes of ever succeeding in it by the many experiments they had made of its difficulty. Indeed, the same day her situation grew more desperate than ever, for after she had received our last supply of refreshments, we again lost sight of her, so that we in general despaired of her ever coming to an anchor.

Thus was this unhappy vessel bandied about within a few leagues of her intended harbour, whilst the neighbourhood of that place, and of those circumstances which could alone put an end to the calamities they laboured under, served only to aggravate their distress by torturing them with a view of the relief it was not in their power to reach.

THE GLOUCESTER COMES TO ANCHOR.

But she was at last delivered from this dreadful situation, at a time when we least expected it, for, after having lost sight of her for several days, we were pleasingly surprised, on the morning of the 23rd of July, to see her open the north-west point of the bay with a flowing sail; when we immediately despatched what boats we had to her assistance, and in an hour's time from our first perceiving her she anchored safe within us in the bay.

CHAPTER 11. TRACES OF SPANISH CRUISERS—ARRIVAL OF THE ANNA PINK.

During the interval of the Gloucester's frequent and ineffectual attempts to reach the island, our employment was cleansing our ship and filling our water. The first of these measures was indispensably necessary to our future health, as the numbers of sick and the unavoidable negligence arising from our deplorable situation at sea, had rendered the decks most intolerably loathsome; and the filling of our water was a caution that appeared not less essential to our future security, as we had reason to apprehend that accidents might oblige us to quit the island at a very short warning. For some appearances, which we had discovered on shore upon our first landing, gave us grounds to believe that there were Spanish cruisers in these seas, which had left the island but a short time before our arrival, and might possibly return there again in search of us; for we knew that this island was the likeliest place, in their own opinion, to meet with us. The circumstances which gave rise to these reflections were our finding on shore several pieces of earthen jars, made use of in those seas for water and other liquids, which appeared to be fresh broken. We saw, too, many heaps of ashes, and near them fish-bones and pieces of fish, besides whole fish scattered here and there, which plainly appeared to have been but a short time out

Page 34

of the water, as they were but just beginning to decay. These appearances were certain indications that there had been ships at this place but a short time before we came there; and as all Spanish merchantmen are instructed to avoid the island on account of its being the common rendezvous of their enemies, we concluded those who had touched here to be ships of force; and not knowing that Pizarro was returned to Buenos Ayres, and ignorant what strength might have been fitted out at Calla, we were under some concern for our safety, being in so wretched and enfeebled a condition that, notwithstanding the rank of our ship and the sixty guns she carried on board, which would only have aggravated our dishonour, there was scarcely a privateer sent to sea that was not an overmatch for us. However, our fears on this head proved imaginary, and we were not exposed to the disgrace which might have been expected to have befallen us had we been necessitated to fight our sixty-gun ship with no more than thirty hands.

After the Gloucester's arrival we were employed in earnest in examining and repairing our rigging.

Towards the middle of August our men being indifferently recovered, they were permitted to quit their sick tents and to build separate huts for themselves; as it was imagined that by living a part they would be much cleaner, and consequently likely to recover their strength the sooner; but at the same time particular orders were given that on the firing of a gun from the ship they should instantly repair to the waterside.

I should have mentioned that the Trial sloop at her arrival had informed us that on the 9th of May she had fallen in with our victualler not far distant from the continent of Chili, and had kept company with her for four days, when they were parted in a hard gale of wind. This gave us some room to hope that she was safe, and that she might soon join us; but all June and July being past without any news of her, we suspected she was lost, and at the end of July the Commodore ordered all the ships to a short allowance of bread.* And it was not in our bread only that we feared a deficiency, for since our arrival at this island we discovered that our former purser had neglected to take on board large quantities of several kinds of provisions which the Commodore had expressly ordered him to receive; so that the supposed loss of our victualler was on all accounts a mortifying consideration.

THE ANNA PINK.

However, on Sunday, the 16th of August, about noon, we espied a sail in the northern quarter, and a gun was immediately fired from the Centurion to call off the people from shore, who readily obeyed the summons and repaired to the beach, where the boats waited to carry them on board. And now being prepared for the reception of this ship in view whether friend or enemy, we had various speculations about her; but about three in

the afternoon our disputes were ended by unanimous persuasion that it was our
victualler,

Page 35

the Anna pink. This ship, though, like the Gloucester, she had fallen in to the northward of the island, had yet the good fortune to come to an anchor in the bay at five in the afternoon. Her arrival gave us all the sincerest joy, for each ship's company was now restored to its full allowance of bread, and we were now freed from the apprehensions of our provisions falling short before we could reach some amicable port—a calamity which, in these seas, is of all others the most irretrievable. This was the last ship that joined us.

(Note. The flour was on board the Anna pink.)

CHAPTER 12. THE WRECK OF THE WAGER—A MUTINY.

The remaining ships of the squadron were the Severn, the Pearl, and the Wager, store-ship. The Severn and Pearl parted company with the squadron off Cape Noir and, as we afterwards learned, put back to the Brazils, so that of all the ships which came into the South Seas the Wager, Captain Cheap, was the only one that was missing. This ship had on board some field-pieces mounted for land service, together with some Cohorn mortars, and several kinds of artillery, stores, and tools, intended for the operations on shore; and therefore, as the enterprise on Baldivia had been resolved on for the first undertaking of the squadron, Captain Cheap was extremely solicitous that these materials, which were in his custody, might be ready before Baldivia, that if the squadron should possibly rendezvous there, no delay nor disappointment might be imputed to him.

But whilst the Wager, with these views, was making the best of her way to her first rendezvous off the island of Socoro, she made the land on the 14th of May, about the latitude of 47 degrees south, and the captain, exerting himself on this occasion in order to get clear of it, he had the misfortune to fall down the after-ladder, and thereby dislocated his shoulder, which rendered him incapable of acting. This accident, together with the crazy condition of the ship, which was little better than a wreck, prevented her from getting off to sea, and entangled her more and more with the land, so that the next morning at daybreak she struck on a sunken rock, and soon after bilged and grounded between two small islands at about a musket-shot from the shore.

DISORDER AND ANARCHY.

In this situation the ship continued entire a long time, so that all the crew had it in their power to get safe on shore, but a general confusion taking place, numbers of them, instead of consulting their safety or reflecting on their calamitous condition, fell to pillaging the ship, arming themselves with the first weapons that came to hand and threatening to murder all who should oppose them. This frenzy was greatly heightened by the liquors they found on board, with which they got so extremely drunk that some of

them, tumbling down between decks, were drowned as the water flowed in, being incapable of getting

Page 36

up and retreating to other places where the water had not yet entered, and the captain, having done his utmost to get the whole crew on shore, was at last obliged to leave these mutineers behind him and to follow his officers and such as he had been able to prevail on; but he did not fail to send back the boats to persuade those who remained to have some regard to their preservation, though all his efforts were for some time without success. However the weather next day proving stormy, and there being great danger of the ship's parting, they began to be alarmed with the fears of perishing, and were desirous of getting to land; but it seems their madness had not yet left them, for the boat not appearing to fetch them off as soon as they expected, they at last pointed a four-pounder which was on the quarter-deck against the hut where they knew the captain resided on shore, and fired two shots, which passed but just over it.

From this specimen of the behaviour of part of the crew it will not be difficult to frame some conjecture of the disorder and anarchy which took place when they at last got all on shore.

There was another important point which set the greatest part of the people at variance with the captain: this was their differing with him in opinion on the measures to be pursued in the present exigency, for the captain was determined, if possible, to fit up the boats in the best manner he could and to proceed with them to the northward; for having with him above a hundred men in health, and having got some firearms and ammunition from the wreck, he did not doubt that they could master any Spanish vessel they should meet with in those seas, and he thought he could not fail of meeting with one in the neighbourhood of Chiloe or Baldivia, in which, when he had taken her, he intended to proceed to the rendezvous at Juan Fernandez; and he further insisted, that should they meet with no prize by the way, yet the boats alone would easily carry them there. But this was a scheme that, however prudent, was no ways relished by the generality of his people, for, being quite jaded with the distresses and dangers they had already run through, they could not think of prosecuting an enterprise further which had hitherto proved so disastrous, and, therefore, the common resolution was to lengthen the long-boat, and with that and the rest of the boats to steer to the southward, to pass through the Straits of Magellan, and to range along the east side of South America till they should arrive at Brazil, where they doubted not to be well received, and to procure a passage to Great Britain. This project was at first sight infinitely more hazardous and tedious than what was proposed by the captain, but as it had the air of returning home, and flattered them with the hopes of bringing them once more to their native country, this circumstance alone rendered them inattentive to all its inconveniences, and made them adhere to it with insurmountable obstinacy, so that the captain himself,

Page 37

though he never changed his opinion, was yet obliged to give way to the torrent, and in appearance to acquiesce in this resolution, whilst he endeavoured underhand to give it all the obstruction he could, particularly in the lengthening of the long-boat, which he contrived should be of such a size that, though it might serve to carry them to Juan Fernandez, would yet, he hoped, appear incapable of so long a navigation as that to the coast of Brazil.

AN UNHAPPY ACCIDENT.

But the captain, by his steady opposition at first to this favourite project, had much embittered the people against him, to which, likewise, the following unhappy accident greatly contributed. There was a midshipman whose name was Cozens, who had appeared the foremost in all the refractory proceedings of the crew. He had involved himself in brawls with most of the officers who had adhered to the captain's authority, and had even treated the captain himself with great abuse and insolence. As his turbulence and brutality grew every day more and more intolerable, it was not in the least doubted but there were some violent measures in agitation in which Cozens was engaged as the ringleader, for which reason the captain and those about him constantly kept themselves on their guard. But at last the purser having, by the captain's order, stopped the allowance of a fellow who would not work, Cozens, though the man did not complain to him, intermeddled in the affair with great eagerness, and grossly insulting the purser, who was then delivering our provisions just by the captain's tent, and was himself sufficiently violent, the purser, enraged by his scurrility, and perhaps piqued by former quarrels, cried out—"A mutiny!" adding "that the dog had pistols," and then himself fired a shot at Cozens, which, however, missed him. But the captain, on this outcry and the report of the pistol, rushed out of his tent, and, not doubting but it had been fired by Cozens as the commencement of a mutiny, he immediately shot him in the head without further deliberation, and though he did not kill him on the spot, yet the wound proved mortal, and he died about fourteen days after.

This incident, however displeasing to the people, did yet for a considerable time awe them to their duty, and rendered them more submissive to the captain's authority. But at last, when towards the middle of October the long-boat was nearly completed and they were preparing to put to sea, the additional provocation he gave them by covertly traversing their project of proceeding through the Straits of Magellan, and their fears that he might at length engage a party sufficient to overturn this favourite measure, made them resolve to make use of the death of Cozens as a reason for depriving him of his command, under pretence of carrying him a prisoner to England to be tried for murder, and he was accordingly confined under a guard. But they never intended to carry him with them, as they too well knew what they had to apprehend on their return to England if their commander should be present to confront them, and therefore, when they were just ready to put to sea, they set him at liberty, leaving him and the few who

chose to take their fortunes with him no other embarkation but the yawl, to which the barge was afterwards added by the people on board her being prevailed on to return back.

Page 38

CHAPTER 13. THE WRECK OF THE WAGER (CONTINUED)—THE ADVENTURES OF THE CAPTAIN'S PARTY.

When the ship was wrecked there remained alive on board the Wager near a hundred and thirty persons; of these, above thirty died during their stay upon the place, and near eighty went off in the long-boat and the cutter to the southward; so that there remained with the captain, after their departure, no more than nineteen persons, which, however, was as many as the barge and the yawl—the only embarkations left them—could well carry off. It was on the 13th of October, five months after the shipwreck, that the long-boat, converted into a schooner, weighed and stood to the southward, giving the captain who, with Lieutenant Hamilton, of the land forces, and the surgeon, was then on the beach, three cheers at their departure. It was the 29th of January following before they arrived at Rio Grande, on the coast of Brazil; and having by various accidents, left about twenty of their people on shore at the different places they touched at, and a greater number having perished by hunger during the course of their navigation, there were no more than thirty of them left when they arrived in that port. Indeed, the undertaking of itself was a most extraordinary one, for, not to mention the length of the run, the vessel was scarcely able to contain the number that first put to sea in her; and their stock of provisions (being only what they had saved out of the ship) was extremely slender; and the cutter, the only boat they had with them, soon broke away from the stern and was staved to pieces; so that when their provision and their water failed them, they had frequently no means of getting on shore to search for a fresh supply.

When the long-boat and cutter were gone, the captain and those who were left with him proposed to pass to the northward in the barge and yawl; but the weather was so bad, and the difficulty of subsisting so great, that it was two months after the departure of the long-boat before he was able to put to sea. It seems the place where the Wager was cast away was not a part of the continent, as was first imagined, but an island at some distance from the main, which afforded no other sorts of provision but shellfish and a few herbs; and as the greatest part of what they had got from the ship was carried off in the long-boat, the captain and his people were often in great necessity, especially as they chose to preserve what little sea-provisions remained for their store when they should go to the northwards.

Upon the 14th of December the captain and his people embarked in the barge and the yawl in order to proceed to the northward, taking on board with them all the provisions they could amass from the wreck of a ship; but they had scarcely been an hour at sea when the wind began to blow hard, and the sea ran so high that they were obliged to throw the greatest part of their provisions overboard to avoid immediate destruction.

Page 39

STRUGGLING WITH DISASTER.

This was a terrible misfortune in a part of the world where food is so difficult to be got; however, they still persisted in their design, putting on shore as often as they could to seek subsistence. But, about a fortnight after, another dreadful accident befell them, for the yawl sank at an anchor, and one of the men in her was drowned; and as the barge was incapable of carrying the whole company, they were now reduced to the hard necessity of leaving four marines behind them on that desolate shore. But they still kept on their course to the northward, struggling with their disasters, and greatly delayed by the perverseness of the winds and frequent interruptions which their search after food occasioned; till at last, about the end of January, having made three unsuccessful attempts to double a headland which they supposed to be what the Spaniards called Cape Tres Montes, it was unanimously resolved to give over this expedition, the difficulties of which appeared insuperable, and to return again to Wager Island, where they got back about the middle of February, quite disheartened and dejected with their reiterated disappointments and almost perishing with hunger and fatigue.

However, on their return they had the good luck to meet with several pieces of beef which had been washed out of the ship and were swimming in the sea. This was a most seasonable relief to them after the hardships they had endured; and to complete their good fortune, there came in a short time two canoes of Indians, amongst whom was a native of Chiloe who spoke a little Spanish; and the surgeon who was with Captain Cheap understanding that language, he made a bargain with the Indian, that if he would carry the captain and his people to Chiloe in the barge, he should have her and all that belonged to her for his pains. Accordingly, on the 6th of March, the eleven persons, to which the company was now reduced, embarked in the barge on this new expedition; but after having proceeded for a few days, the captain and four of his principal officers being on shore, the six, who together with an Indian remained in the barge, put off with her to sea and did not return.

By this means there were left on shore Captain Cheap, Mr. Hamilton, lieutenant of marines; the Honourable Mr. Byron and Mr. Campbell, midshipman; and Mr. Elliot, the surgeon. One would have thought their distresses had long before this time been incapable of augmentation, but they found, on reflection, that their present situation was much more dismaying than anything they had yet gone through, being left on a desolate coast without any provisions or the means of procuring any, for their arms, ammunition, and every convenience they were masters of, except the tattered habits they had on, were all carried away in the barge. But when they had sufficiently revolved in their own minds the various circumstances of this unexpected calamity, and were persuaded that they had no relief to hope

Page 40

for, they perceived a canoe at a distance, which proved to be that of the Indian who had undertaken to carry them to Chiloe, he and his family being then on board it. He made no difficulty of coming to them, for it seems he had left Captain Cheap and his people a little before to go a-fishing, and had in the meantime committed them to the care of the other Indian, whom the sailors had carried to sea in the barge. But when he came on shore and found the barge gone and his companion missing, he was extremely concerned, and could with difficulty be persuaded that the other Indian was not murdered; but being at last satisfied with the account that was given him, he still undertook to carry them to the Spanish settlements, and (as the Indians are well skilled in fishing and fowling) to procure them provisions by the way.

CHILOE.

About the middle of March, Captain Cheap and the four who were left with him set out for Chiloe, the Indian having procured a number of canoes, and got many of his neighbours together for that purpose. Soon after they embarked, Mr. Elliot, the surgeon, died, so that there now remained only four of the whole company. At last, after a very complicated passage by land and water, Captain Cheap, Mr. Byron, and Mr. Campbell arrived, in the beginning of June, at the island of Chiloe, where they were received by the Spaniards with great humanity; but, on account of some quarrel among the Indians, Mr. Hamilton did not get thither till two months after. Thus, above a twelvemonth after the loss of the *Wager*, ended this fatiguing peregrination, which by a variety of misfortunes had diminished the company from twenty to no more than four, and those, too, brought so low that had their distresses continued but a few days longer, in all probability none of them would have survived. For the captain himself was with difficulty recovered and the rest were so reduced by the severity of the weather, their labour, and their want of all kinds of necessaries, that it was wonderful how they supported themselves so long. After some stay at Chiloe, the captain and the three who were with him were sent to Valparaiso, and thence to Santiago, the capital of Chile where they continued above a year; but on the advice of a cartel being settled betwixt Great Britain and Spain, Captain Cheap, Mr. Byron, and Mr. Hamilton were permitted to return to Europe on board a French ship. The other midshipman, Mr. Campbell, having changed his religion whilst at Santiago, chose to go back overland to Buenos Ayres with Pizarro and his officers, with whom he went afterwards to Spain on board the *Asia*; and there having failed in his endeavours to procure a commission from the Court of Spain, he returned to England, and attempted to get reinstated in the British Navy, and has since published a narration of his adventures, in which he complains of the injustice that had been done him and strongly disavows his ever being in the Spanish service. But as the change of his religion and his offering himself to the Court of Spain (though not accepted) are matters, which he is conscious, are capable of being incontestably proved, on these two heads he has been entirely silent. And now, after this account of the catastrophe of the *Wager*, I shall again resume the thread of our own story.

Page 41

CHAPTER 14. THE LOSSES FROM SCURVY—STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE SQUADRON.

EXTRAORDINARY MORTALITY.

Our people by the beginning of September were so far recovered of the scurvy that there was little danger of burying any more at present; and therefore I shall now sum up the total of our loss since our departure from England, the better to convey some idea of our past sufferings and of our present strength. We had buried on board the *Centurion* since our leaving St. Helens 292, and had now remaining on board 214. This will doubtless appear a most extraordinary mortality; but yet on board the *Gloucester* it had been much greater, for out of a much smaller crew than ours they had buried the same number, and had only eighty-two remaining alive. It might be expected that on board the *Trial* the slaughter would have been the most terrible, as her decks were almost constantly knee-deep in water; but it happened otherwise, for she escaped more favourably than the rest, since she only buried forty-two, and had now thirty-nine remaining alive. The havoc of this disease had fallen still severer on the invalids and marines than on the sailors; for on board the *Centurion*, out of fifty invalids and seventy-nine marines there remained only four invalids, including officers, and eleven marines; and on board the *Gloucester* every invalid perished, and out of forty-eight marines only two escaped. From this account it appears that the three ships together departed from England with 961 men on board, of whom 626 were dead before this time; so that the whole of our remaining crews, which were now to be distributed among three ships, amounted to no more than 335 men and boys, a number greatly insufficient for manning the *Centurion* alone, and barely capable of navigating all the three with the utmost exertion of their strength and vigour. This prodigious reduction of our men was still the more terrifying as we were hitherto uncertain of the fate of Pizarro's squadron, and had reason to suppose that some part of it at least had got round into these seas. Indeed we were satisfied from our own experience that they must have suffered greatly in their passage; but then every port in the South Seas was open to them, and the whole power of Chile and Peru would doubtless be united in refreshing and refitting them, and recruiting the numbers they had lost. Besides, we had some obscure knowledge of a force to be fitted out at Callao; and, however contemptible the ships and sailors of this part of the world may have been generally esteemed, it was scarcely possible for anything bearing the name of a ship of force to be feebler or less considerable than ourselves. And had there been nothing to be apprehended from the naval power of the Spaniards in this part of the world, yet our enfeebled condition would nevertheless give us the greatest uneasiness, as we were incapable of attempting any of their considerable

Page 42

places; for the risking of twenty men, weak as we then were, was risking the safety of the whole. So that we conceived we should be necessitated to content ourselves with what few prizes we could pick up at sea before we were discovered, after which we should in all probability be obliged to depart with precipitation, and esteem ourselves fortunate to regain our native country, leaving our enemies to triumph on the inconsiderable mischief they had received from a squadron whose equipment had filled them with such dreadful apprehensions. It is true the final event proved more honourable than we had foreboded; but the intermediate calamities did likewise greatly surpass our most gloomy apprehensions, and could they have been predicted to us at this island of Juan Fernandez, they would doubtless have appeared insurmountable.

CHAPTER 15. A PRIZE—SPANISH PREPARATIONS—A NARROW ESCAPE.

A CHASE.

In the beginning of September, as has been already mentioned, our men were tolerably well recovered; and now the time of navigation in this climate drawing near, we exerted ourselves in getting our ships in readiness for the sea. On the 8th, about eleven in the morning, we espied a sail to the north-east, which continued to approach us till her courses appeared even with the horizon. In this interval we all had hopes she might prove one of our own squadron; but at length, finding she steered away to the eastward without hauling in for the island, we concluded she must be a Spaniard. It was resolved to pursue her; and the Centurion being in the greatest forwardness, we immediately got all our hands on board, set up our rigging, bent our sails, and by five in the afternoon got under sail. We had at this time very little wind, so that all the boats were employed to tow us out of the bay; and even what wind there was lasted only long enough to give us an offing of two or three leagues, when it flattened to a calm. The night coming on, we lost sight of the chase, and were extremely impatient for the return of daylight, in hopes to find that she had been becalmed as well as we, though I must confess that her greater distance from the land was a reasonable ground for suspecting the contrary, as we indeed found in the morning, to our great mortification; for though the weather continued perfectly clear, we had no sight of the ship from the mast-head. But as we were now satisfied that it was an enemy, and the first we had seen in these seas, we resolved not to give over the search lightly; and a small breeze springing up from the west-north-west, we got up our top-gallant masts and yards, set all the sails, and steered to the south-east, in hopes of retrieving our chase, which we imagined to be bound to Valparaiso. We continued on this course all that day and the next; and then, not getting sight of our chase, we gave over the pursuit, conceiving that by that time she must in all probability have reached her port.

Page 43

And now we prepared to return to Juan Fernandez, and hauled up to the south-west with that view, having but very little wind till the 12th, when, at three in the morning, there sprang up a fresh gale from the west-south-west, and we tacked and stood to the north-west; and at daybreak we were agreeably surprised with the sight of a sail on our weather-bow, between four and five leagues distant. On this we crowded all the sail we could, and stood after her, and soon perceived it not to be the same ship we originally gave chase to. She at first bore down upon us, showing Spanish colours, and making a signal as to her consort; but observing that we did not answer her signal, she instantly luffed close to the wind and stood to the southward. Our people were now all in spirits, and put the ship about with great alacrity; and as the chase appeared to be a large ship, and had mistaken us for her consort, we conceived that she was a man-of-war, and probably one of Pizarro's squadron. This induced the Commodore to order all the officers' cabins to be knocked down and thrown overboard, with several casks of water and provisions which stood between the guns; so that we had soon a clear ship, ready for an engagement. About nine o'clock we had thick, hazy weather, and a shower of rain, during which we lost sight of the chase; and we were apprehensive, if the weather should continue, that by going upon the other tack, or by some other artifice, she might escape us; but it clearing up in less than an hour, we found that we had both weathered and forereached upon her considerably, and now we were near enough discover that she was only a merchantman, without so much as a single tier of guns. About half an hour after twelve, being then within a reasonable distance of her, we fired four shot amongst her rigging, on which they lowered their topsails and bore down to us, but in very great confusion, their top-gallant-sails and stay-sails all fluttering in the wind. This was owing to their having let run their sheets and halyards just as we fired at them, after which not a man amongst them had courage enough to venture aloft (for there the shot had passed but just before) to take them in.

As soon as the vessel came within hail of us, the Commodore ordered them to bring to under his lee-quarter, and then hoisted out the boat and sent Mr. Suamarez, his first lieutenant, to take possession of the prize, with directions to send all the prisoners on board the Centurion, but first the officers and passengers.

A TERRIFIED CREW.

When Mr. Suamarez came on board them, they received him at the side with the strongest tokens of the most abject submission, for they were all of them (especially the passengers, who were twenty-five in number), extremely terrified and under the greatest apprehensions of meeting with very severe and cruel usage. But the lieutenant endeavoured with great courtesy to dissipate their fright, assuring them that their fears were altogether

Page 44

groundless, and that they would find a generous enemy in the Commodore, who was not less remarkable for his lenity and humanity than for his resolution and courage. The passengers who were first sent on board the *Centurion* informed us that our prize was called “*Nuestra Senora del Monte Carmelo*”, and was commanded by Don Manuel Zamorra. Her cargo consisted chiefly of sugar, and great quantities of blue cloth made in the province of Quito, somewhat resembling our English coarse broad-cloths, but inferior to them. They had, besides, several bales of a coarser sort of cloth, of different colours, called by them *Pannia da Tierra*, with a few bales of cotton and tobacco, which though strong was not ill-flavoured. These were the principal goods on board her; but we found, besides, what was to us much more valuable than the rest of the cargo. This was some trunks of wrought plate, and twenty-three serons of dollars, each weighing upwards of 200 pounds avoirdupois. The ship’s burthen was about 450 tons; she had fifty-three sailors on board, both whites and blacks; she came from Callao, and had been twenty-seven days at sea before she fell into our hands. She was bound to the port of Valparaiso, in the kingdom of Chili, and proposed to have returned thence loaded with corn and Chili wine, some gold, dried beef, and small cordage, which at Callao they convert into larger rope. The prisoners informed us that they left Callao in company with two other ships, which they had parted with some days before, and that at first they conceived us to be one of their company; and by the description we gave them of the ship we had chased from Juan Fernandez, they assured us she was of their number, but that the coming in sight of that island was directly repugnant to the merchants’ instructions, who had expressly forbid it, as knowing that if any English squadron was in those seas, the island of Fernandez was most probably the place of their rendezvous.

And now it is necessary that I should relate the important intelligence which we met with on board her, partly from the information of the prisoners, and partly from the letters and papers which fell into our hands. We here first learned with certainty the force and destination of that squadron which cruised off Madeira at our arrival there, and afterwards chased the *Pearl* in our passage to Port St. Julian. And we had, at the same time, the satisfaction to find that Pizarro, after his utmost endeavours to gain his passage into these seas, had been forced back again into the River of Plate, with the loss of two of his largest ships; and besides this disappointment of Pizarro, which considering our great debility, was no unacceptable intelligence, we further learned that an embargo had been laid upon all shipping in these seas by the Viceroy of Peru, in the month of May preceding, on a supposition that about that time we might arrive upon the coast. But on the account sent overland by Pizarro of his own distresses, part of which they knew we must have

Page 45

encountered, as we were at sea during the same time, and on their having no news of us in eight months after we were known to set sail from St. Catherine's, they were fully persuaded that we were either shipwrecked, or had perished at sea, or at least had been obliged to put back again; for it was conceived impossible for any ships to continue at sea during so long an interval, and, therefore, on the application of the merchants and the firm persuasion of our having miscarried, the embargo had been lately taken off.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

This last article made us flatter ourselves that, as the enemy was still a stranger to our having got round Cape Horn, and the navigation of these seas was restored, we might meet with some considerable captures, and might thereby indemnify ourselves for the incapacity we were now under of attempting any of their considerable settlements on shore. And thus much we were certain of, from the information of our prisoners, that whatever our success might be as to the prizes we might light on, we had nothing to fear, weak as we were, from the Spanish force in this part of the world; though we discovered that we had been in most imminent peril from the enemy when we least apprehended it, and when our other distresses were at the greatest height. For we learned from the letters on board that Pizarro, in the express he dispatched to the Viceroy of Peru after his return to the River of Plate, had intimated to him that it was possible some part at least of the English squadron might get round, but that, as he was certain from his own experience that if they did arrive in those seas it must be in a very weak and defenceless condition, he advised the Viceroy, in order to be secure at all events, to fit out what ships of force he had, and send them to the southward, where in all probability they would intercept us singly and before we had an opportunity of touching anywhere for refreshment, in which case he doubted not but we should prove an easy conquest. The Viceroy of Peru approved of this advice, and immediately fitted out four ships of force from Callao, one of 50 guns, two of 40 guns, and one of 24 guns. Three of them were stationed off the port of Concepcion,* and one of them at the Island of Juan Fernandez; and in these stations they continued cruising for us till the 6th of June, when, not seeing anything of us, and conceiving it to be impossible that we could have kept the seas so long, they quitted their cruise and returned to Callao, fully satisfied that we had either perished or at least had been driven back. As the time of their quitting their station was but a few days before our arrival at the island of Fernandez, it is evident that had we made that island on our first search for it on the 28th of May, when we first expected to see it, and were in reality very near it, we had doubtless fallen in with some part of the Spanish squadron; and in the distressed condition we were then in the meeting with a healthy, well-provided

Page 46

enemy was an incident that could not but have been perplexing and might perhaps have proved fatal. I shall only add that these Spanish ships sent out to intercept us had been greatly shattered by a storm during their cruise, and that, after their arrival at Callao, they had been laid up. And our prisoners assured us that whenever intelligence was received at Lima of our being in these seas, it would be at least two months before this armament could be again fitted out.

(Note. La Concepcion in Chili, about 270 miles south of Valparaiso.)

The whole of this intelligence was as favourable as we in our reduced circumstances could wish for; and now we were fully satisfied as to the broken jars, ashes, and fish-bones which we had observed at our first landing at Juan Fernandez, these things being doubtless the relics of the cruisers stationed off that port. Having thus satisfied ourselves in the material articles, and having got on board the Centurion most of the prisoners and all the silver, we, at eight in the same evening, made sail to the northward, in company with our prize, and at six the next morning discovered the island of Juan Fernandez, where the next day both we and our prize came to an anchor. And here I cannot omit one remarkable incident which occurred when the prize and her crew came into the bay where the rest of the squadron lay. The Spaniards in the Carmelo had been sufficiently informed of the distresses we had gone through, and were greatly surprised that we had ever surmounted them; but when they saw the Trial sloop at anchor they were still more astonished, and it was with great difficulty they were prevailed on to believe that she came from England with the rest of the squadron, they at first insisting that it was impossible such a bauble as that could pass round Cape Horn when the best ships of Spain were obliged to put back.

CHAPTER 16. THE COMMODORE'S PLANS—ANOTHER PRIZE—THE TRIAL DESTROYED.

By the time we arrived at Juan Fernandez the letters found on board our prize were more minutely examined; and it appearing from them and from the accounts of our prisoners that several other merchantmen were bound from Callao to Valparaiso, Mr. Anson despatched the Trial sloop the very next morning to cruise off the last-mentioned port, reinforcing her with ten hands from on board his own ship. Mr. Anson likewise resolved, on the intelligence recited above, to separate the ships under his command and employ them in distinct cruises, as he thought that by this means we should not only increase our chance for prizes, but that we should likewise run less risk of alarming the coast and of being discovered.

THE LAST LEAVE OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

Page 47

And now, the spirits of our people being greatly raised and their despondency dissipated by this earnest of success, they forgot all their past distresses and resumed their wonted alacrity, and laboured indefatigably in completing our water, receiving our lumber, and preparing to take our farewell of the island. But as these occupations took us up four or five days, with all our industry, the Commodore in that interval directed that the guns belonging to the *Anna pink**, being four 6-pounders, four 4-pounders, and two swivels, should be mounted on board the *Carmelo*, our prize; and having sent on board the *Gloucester* six passengers and twenty-three seaman to assist in navigating the ship, he directed Captain Mitchel to leave the island as soon as possible, the service requiring the utmost despatch, ordering him to proceed to the latitude of 5 degrees south, and there to cruise off the high land of Paita, at such a distance from shore as should prevent his being discovered. On this station he was to continue till he should be joined by the *Commodore*, which would be whenever it should be known that the Viceroy had fitted out the ships at Callao, or on Mr. Anson's receiving any other intelligence that should make it necessary to unite our strength. These orders being delivered to the captain of the *Gloucester*, and all our business completed, we on the Saturday following, being the 19th of September, weighed our anchor in company with our prize, and got out of the bay, taking our last leave of the island of Juan Fernandez, and steering to the eastward, with an intention of joining the *Trial* sloop in her station off Valparaiso.

(Note. The Anna pink being no longer seaworthy, was broken up at Juan Fernandez.)

On the 24th, a little before sunset, we saw two sail to the eastward, on which our prize stood directly from us, to avoid giving any suspicion of our being cruisers; whilst we in the meantime made ourselves ready for an engagement, and steered towards the two ships we had discovered with all our canvas. We soon perceived that one of these which had the appearance of being a very stout ship made directly for us, whilst the other kept at a very great distance. By seven o'clock we were within pistol-shot of the nearest, and had a broadside ready to pour into her, the gunners having their matches in their hands, and only waiting for orders to fire; but as we knew it was now impossible for her to escape us, Mr. Anson, before he permitted them to fire, ordered the master to hail the ship in Spanish, on which the commanding officer on board her, who proved to be Mr. Hughes, lieutenant of the *Trial*, answered us in English, and informed us that she was a prize taken by the *Trial* a few days before, and that the other sail at a distance was the *Trial* herself, disabled in her masts. We were soon after joined by the *Trial* and Captain Saunders, her commander, came on board the *Centurion*. He informed the Commodore that he had taken this ship the 18th

Page 48

instant, that she was a prime sailer, and had cost him thirty-six hours' chase before he could come up with her; that for some time he gained so little upon her that he began to despair of taking her; and the Spaniards, though alarmed at first with seeing nothing but a cloud of sail in pursuit of them, the Trial's hull being so low in the water that no part of it appeared, yet knowing the goodness of their ship, and finding how little the Trial neared them, they at length laid aside their fears, and recommending themselves to the blessed Virgin for protection, began to think themselves secure. And indeed, their success was very near doing honour to their Ave Marias;* for altering their course in the night and shutting up their windows to prevent any of their lights from being seen, they had some chance of escaping. But a small crevice in one of the shutters rendered all their invocations ineffectual, for through this crevice the people on board the Trial perceived a light, which they chased till they arrived within gun shot, and then Captain Saunders alarmed them unexpectedly with a broadside when they flattered themselves they were got out of his reach. However, for some time after, they still kept the same sail abroad, and it was not observed that this first salute had made any impression on them; but just as the Trial was preparing to repeat her broadside, the Spaniards crept from their holes, lowered their sails, and submitted without any opposition. She was one of the largest merchantmen employed in those seas, being about six hundred tons burthen, and was called the "Arranzazu". She was bound from Callao to Valparaiso, and had much the same cargo with the Carmelo we had taken before, except that her silver amounted only to about 5000 pounds sterling.

(Note. Ave Maria (Hail Mary!) are the opening words of a Roman Catholic prayer to the Virgin Mary.)

THE TRIAL DISABLED.

But to balance this success we had the misfortune to find that the Trial had sprung her mainmast, and that her maintopmast had come by the board; and as we were all of us standing to the eastward the next morning, with a fresh gale at south, she had the additional ill-luck to spring her foremast; so that now she had not a mast left on which she could carry sail. These unhappy incidents were still further aggravated by the impossibility we were just then under of assisting her; for the wind blew so hard, and raised such a hollow sea, that we could not venture to hoist out our boat, and consequently could have no communication with her; so that we were obliged to lie to for the greatest part of forty-eight hours to attend her.

Page 49

The weather proving somewhat more dominate on the 27th, we sent our boat for the captain of the Trial, who, when he came on board us, produced an instrument, signed by himself and all his officers, representing that the sloop, besides being dismasted, was so very leaky in her hull that even in moderate weather it was necessary to keep the pumps constantly at work, and that they were then scarcely sufficient to keep her free; so that in the late gale, though they had all been engaged at the pumps by turns, yet the water had increased upon them; and, upon the whole, they apprehended her to be at present so very defective that if they met with much bad weather they must all inevitably perish, and therefore they petitioned the Commodore to take some measures for their future safety. But the refitting of the Trial and the repairing of her defects was an undertaking that in the present conjuncture greatly exceeded his power; and besides, it would have been extreme imprudence in so critical a juncture to have loitered away so much time as would have been necessary for these operations. The Commodore, therefore, had no choice left him but that of taking out her people and destroying her; but at the same time, as he conceived it necessary for His Majesty's Service to keep up the appearance of our force, he appointed the Trial's prize (which had been often employed by the Viceroy of Peru as a man-of-war) to be a frigate in His Majesty's Service, manning her with the Trial's crew and giving new commissions to the captain and all the inferior officers accordingly. This new frigate, when in the Spanish service, had mounted thirty-two guns, but she was now to have only twenty, which were the twelve that were on board the Trial, and eight that had belonged to the Anna pink. When this affair was thus far regulated, Mr. Anson gave orders to Captain Saunders to put it in execution, directing him to take out of the sloop the arms, stores, ammunition, and everything that could be of any use to the other ships, and then to scuttle her and sink her. And after Captain Saunders had seen her destroyed he was to proceed with his new frigate (to be called the Trial's prize) and to cruise off the high land of Valparaiso, keeping it from him north-north-west, at the distance of twelve or fourteen leagues. For as all ships bound from Valparaiso to the northward steer that course, Mr. Anson proposed by this means to stop any intelligence that might be despatched to Callao of two of their ships being missing, which might give them apprehensions of the English squadron being in their neighbourhood. The Trial's prize was to continue on this station twenty-four days and if not joined by the Commodore at the expiration of that term, she was then to proceed down the coast to Pisco, or Nasca, where she would be certain to meet with Mr. Anson. The Commodore likewise ordered Lieutenant Suamarez who commanded the Centurion's prize, to keep company with Captain Saunders both to assist him in unloading the sloop, and also that, by spreading in their cruise, there might be less danger of any of the enemy's ships slipping by unobserved. These orders being despatched, the Centurion parted from them at eleven in the evening on the 27th of September, directing her course to the southward, with a view of cruising for some days to the windward of Valparaiso.

Page 50

CHAPTER 17. MORE CAPTURES—ALARM OF THE COAST—PAITA.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Though, after leaving Captain Saunders, we were very expeditious in regaining our station, where we got the 29th at noon, yet in plying on and off till the 6th of October we had not the good fortune to discover a sail of any sort, and then, having lost all hopes of making any advantage by a longer stay, we made sail to the leeward of the port in order to join our prizes; but when we arrived on the station appointed for them we did not meet with them, though we continued there four or five days. We supposed that some chase had occasioned their leaving the station, and therefore we proceeded down the coast to the high land of Nasca, where Captain Saunders was directed to join us. Here we arrived on the 21st, and were in great expectation of meeting with some of the enemy's ships on the coast, as both the accounts of former voyages and the information of our prisoners assured us that all ships bound to Callao constantly make this land, to prevent the danger of running to the leeward of the port. But notwithstanding the advantages of this station we saw no sail till the 2nd of November, when two ships appeared in sight together. We immediately gave them chase, but soon perceived that they were the *Trial's* and *Centurion's* prizes. We found they had not been more fortunate in their cruise than we were, for they had seen no vessel since they separated from us.

We bore away the same afternoon, taking particular care to keep at such a distance from the shore that there might be no danger of our being discovered from thence.

By the 5th of November, at three in the afternoon, we were advanced within view of the high land of Barranca, and an hour and a half afterwards we had the satisfaction we had so long wished for, of seeing a sail. She first appeared to leeward, and we all immediately gave her chase; but the *Centurion* so much out sailed the two prizes that we soon ran them out of sight, and gained considerably on the chase. However, night coming on before we came up to her, we about seven o'clock lost sight of her, and were in some perplexity what course to steer; but at last Mr. Anson resolved, as we were then before the wind, to keep all his sails set and not to change his course. For though we had no doubt but the chase would alter her course in the night, yet, as it was uncertain what tack she would go upon, it was thought more prudent to keep on our course, as we must by this means unavoidably near her, than to change it on conjecture, when, if we should mistake, we must infallibly lose her. Thus, then, we continued the chase about an hour and a half in the dark, someone or other on board us constantly imagining they discerned her sails right ahead of us; but at last Mr. Brett, then our second lieutenant, did really discover her about four points on the larboard-bow, steering off to the seaward. We immediately clapped

Page 51

the helm a-weather and stood for her, and in less than an hour came up with her, and having fired fourteen shots at her, she struck. Our third lieutenant, Mr. Dennis, was sent in the boat with sixteen men to take possession of the prize and to return the prisoners to our ship. This ship was named the “Santa Teresa de Jesus”, built at Guayaquil, of about three hundred tons burthen, and was commanded by Bartolome Urrunaga, a Biscayer. She was bound from Guayaquil to Callao; her loading consisted of timber, cacao, cocoa-nuts, tobacco, hides, Pito thread (which is very strong and is made of a species of grass) Quito cloth, wax, *etc.* The specie on board her was inconsiderable, being principally small silver money and not amounting to more than 170 pounds sterling. It is true her cargo was of great value, could we have disposed of it, but the Spaniards having strict orders never to ransom their ships, all the goods that we took in these seas, except what little we had occasion for ourselves, were of no advantage to us. Indeed, though we could make no profit thereby ourselves, it was some satisfaction to us to consider that it was so much really lost to the enemy, and that the despoiling them was no contemptible branch of that service in which we were now employed by our country.

I have before observed that at the beginning of this chase the Centurion ran her two consorts out of sight, for which reason we lay by all the night, after we had taken the prize, for Captain Saunders and Lieutenant Suamarez to join us, firing guns and making false fires every half-hour to prevent their passing us unobserved; but they were so far astern that they neither heard nor saw any of our signals and were not able to come up with us till broad daylight. When they had joined us we proceeded together to the northward, being now four sail in company.

DESPOILING THE SPANIARDS.

On the 10th of November we were three leagues south of the southernmost island of Lobos, lying in the latitude of 6 degrees 27 minutes south. We were now drawing near to the station appointed to the Gloucester, for which reason, fearing to miss her, we made an easy sail all night. The next morning at daybreak, we saw a ship in shore, and to windward, plying up to the coast. She had passed by us with the favour of the night, and we, soon perceiving her not to be the Gloucester, gave her chase; but it proving very little wind, so that neither of us could make much way, the Commadore ordered the barge, his pinnace, and the Trial’s pinnace to be manned and armed, and to pursue the chase and board her. Lieutenant Brett, who commanded the barge, came up with her first, about nine o’clock, and running alongside of her, he fired a volley of small shot between the masts, just over the heads of the people on board, and then instantly entered with the greatest part of his men; but the enemy made no resistance, being sufficiently frightened by the dazzling of the cutlasses, and the

Page 52

volley they had just received. Lieutenant Brett ordered the sails to be trimmed, and bore down to the Commodore, taking up in his way the two pinnaces. When he was arrived within about four miles of us, he put off in the barge, bringing with him a number of prisoners who had given him some material intelligence, which he was desirous the Commodore should be acquainted with as soon as possible. On his arrival we learned that the prize was called “Nuestra Senora del Carmen”, of about two hundred and seventy tons burthen; she was commanded by Marcos Morena, a native of Venice, and had on board forty-three mariners. She was deep laden with steel, iron, wax, pepper, cedar, plank, snuff, rosaries, European bale goods, powder-blue, cinnamon, Romish indulgences, and other species of merchandise. And though this cargo, in our present circumstances was but of little value to us, yet with respect to the Spaniards it was the most considerable capture that fell into our hands in this part of the world; for it amounted to upwards of 400,000 dollars prime cost at Panama. This ship was bound to Callao, and had stopped at Païta in her passage to take in a recruit of water and provisions, and had not left that place above twenty-four hours before she fell into our hands.

IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE.

I have mentioned that Mr. Brett had received some important intelligence from the prisoners, which he endeavoured to acquaint the Commodore with immediately. The first person he received it from (though upon further examination it was confirmed by the other prisoners) was one John Williams, an Irishman, whom he found on board the Spanish vessel. Williams was a Papist, who worked his passage from Cadiz, and had travelled over all the kingdom of Mexico as a pedlar. He pretended that by this business he got 4,000 or 5,000 dollars; but that he was embarrassed by the priests, who knew he had money, and was at last stripped of all he had. He was, indeed, at present all in rags, being but just got out of Païta gaol, where he had been confined for some misdemeanour; he expressed great joy upon seeing his countrymen, and immediately informed them that a few days before a vessel came into Païta, where the master of her informed the Governor that he had been chased in the offing by a very large ship, which, from her size and the colour of her sails, he was persuaded must be one of the English squadron. This we then conjectured to have been the Gloucester, as we afterwards found it was. The Governor, upon examining the master, was fully satisfied of his relation, and immediately sent away an express to Lima to acquaint the Viceroy therewith; and the royal officer residing at Païta, being apprehensive of a visit from the English, was busily employed in removing the King's treasure and his own to Piura, a town within land about fourteen leagues distant. We further learned from our prisoners that there was a very considerable sum of money, belonging to some

Page 53

merchants at Lima, that was now lodged at the custom-house at Paita; and that this was intended to be shipped on board a vessel which was then in the port of Paita, and was preparing to sail with the utmost expedition, being bound for the Bay of Sonsonate, on the coast of Mexico, in order to purchase a part of the cargo of the Manila ship.* This vessel at Paita was esteemed a prime sailer, and had just received a new coat of tallow on her bottom; and, in the opinion of the prisoners, she might be able to sail the succeeding morning.

(Note. A full account of the Manila ship will be found in Chapter 22 below.)

The character they gave us of this vessel, on which the money was to be shipped, left us little reason to believe that our ship, which had been in the water near two years, could have any chance of coming up with her, if we once suffered her to escape out of the port. And therefore, as we were now discovered, and the coast would be soon alarmed, and as our cruising in these parts any longer would answer no purpose, the Commodore resolved to surprise the place, having first minutely informed himself of its strength and condition, and being fully satisfied that there was little danger of losing many of our men in the attempt.

CHAPTER 18. THE ATTACK ON PAITA.

The town of Paita is situated in the latitude of 5 degrees 12 minutes south, in a most barren soil, composed only of sand and slate; the extent of it is but small, containing in all less than two hundred families. The houses are only ground floors, the walls built of split cane and mud, and the roofs thatched with leaves. These edifices, though extremely slight, are abundantly sufficient for a climate where rain is considered as a prodigy, and is not seen in many years; so that it is said that a small quantity of rain falling in this country in the year 1728, it ruined a great number of buildings, which mouldered away, and, as it were, melted before it. The inhabitants of Paita are principally Indians and black slaves, or at least a mixed breed, the whites being very few. The port of Paita, though in reality little more than a bay, is esteemed the best on that part of the coast, and is indeed a very secure and commodious anchorage. It is greatly frequented by all vessels coming from the north, since it is here only that the ships from Acapulco, Sonsonate, Realejo and Panama can touch and refresh in their passage to Callao; and the length of these voyages (the wind for the greatest part of the year being full against them) renders it impossible to perform them without calling upon the coast for a recruit of fresh water. It is true, Paita is situated on so parched a spot that it does not itself furnish a drop of fresh water, or any kind of greens or provisions, except fish and a few goats; but there is an Indian town called Colan, about two or three leagues distant to the northward, whence water, maize,

Page 54

greens, fowls, *etc.*, are brought to Paita on balsas, or floats, for the convenience of the ships that touch here; and cattle are sometimes brought from Piura, a town which lies about fourteen leagues up in the country. The town of Paita is itself an open place; its sole protection and defence is a small fort near the shore of the bay. It was of consequence to us to be well informed of the fabric and strength of this fort; and by the examination of our prisoners we found that there were eight pieces of cannon mounted in it, but that it had neither ditch nor out work, being only surrounded by a plain brick wall; and that the garrison consisted of only one weak company, but the town itself might possibly arm three hundred men more.

PREPARING FOR A NIGHT ATTACK.

Mr. Anson having informed himself of the strength of the place, resolved to attempt it that very night. We were then about twelve leagues distant from the shore, far enough to prevent our being discovered, yet not so far but that, by making all the sail we could, we might arrive in the bay with our ships in the night. However, the Commodore prudently considered that this would be an improper method of proceeding, as our ships, being such large bodies, might be easily discovered at a distance even in the night, and might thereby alarm the inhabitants and give them an opportunity of removing their valuable effects. He therefore, as the strength of the place did not require our whole force, resolved to attempt it with our boats only, ordering the eighteen-oared barge and our own and the *Trial's* pinnaces on that service; and having picked out fifty-eight men to man them, well provided with arms and ammunition, he gave the command of the expedition to Lieutenant Brett, and gave him his necessary orders. And the better to prevent the disappointment and confusion which might arise from the darkness of the night and the ignorance of the streets and passages of the place, two of the Spanish pilots were ordered to attend the lieutenant and to conduct him to the most convenient landing-place, and were afterwards to be his guides on shore. And that we might have the greater security for their faithful behaviour on this occasion, the Commodore took care to assure all our prisoners that if the pilots acted properly they should all of them be released and set on shore at this place; but in case of any misconduct or treachery, he threatened them that the pilots should be instantly shot and that he would carry all the rest of the Spaniards who were on board him prisoners to England.

During our preparations the ships themselves stood towards the port with all the sail they could make, being secure that we were yet at too great a distance to be seen. But about ten o'clock at night, the ships being then within five leagues of the place, Lieutenant Brett, with the boats under his command, put off, and arrived at the mouth of the bay without being discovered; but no sooner had he entered it than

Page 55

some of the people on board a vessel riding at anchor there perceived him, who instantly put off in their boat, rowing towards the fort, shouting and crying, "The English! the English dogs!" by which the whole town was suddenly alarmed; and our people soon observed several lights hurrying backwards and forwards in the fort and other marks of the inhabitants being in great motion. Lieutenant Brett on this encouraged his men to pull briskly up to the shore, that they might give the enemy as little time as possible to prepare for their defence. However, before our boats could reach the shore, the people in the fort had got ready some of their cannon and pointed them towards the landing-place; and though in the darkness of the night it might be well supposed that chance had a greater share than skill in their direction, yet the first shot passed extremely near one of the boats, whistling just over the heads of the crew. This made our people redouble their efforts, so that they had reached the shore, and were in part disembarked by the time the second gun fired. As soon as our men landed they were conducted by one of the Spanish pilots to the entrance of a narrow street, not above fifty yards distant from the beach, where they were covered from the fire of the fort; and being formed in the best manner the shortness of the time would allow, they immediately marched for the parade, which was a large square at the end of this street, the fort being one side of the square and the Governor's house another. In this march (though performed with tolerable regularity) the shouts and clamours of three-score sailors who had been confined so long on ship-board, and were now for the first time on shore in an enemy's country—joyous as they always are when they land, and animated besides in the present case with the hopes of an immense pillage—the huzzahs, I say, of this spirited detachment, joined with the noise of their drums and favoured by the night, had augmented their numbers, in the opinion of the enemy, to at least three hundred; by which persuasion the inhabitants were so greatly intimidated that they were much more solicitous about the means of their flight than of their resistance. So that though upon entering the parade our people received a volley from the merchants who owned the treasure then in the town, and who, with a few others, had ranged themselves in a gallery that ran round the Governor's house, yet that post was immediately abandoned upon the first fire made by our people, who were thereby left in quiet possession of the parade.

A SMART PIECE OF WORK.

On this success Lieutenant Brett divided his men into two parties, ordering one of them to surround the Governor's house, and, if possible, to secure the Governor, whilst he himself with the other marched to the fort with an intent to force it. But, contrary to his expectation, he entered it without opposition; for the enemy, on his approach, abandoned it, and made their escape over the walls. By this

Page 56

means the whole place was mastered in less than a quarter of an hour's time from the first landing, with no other loss than that of one man killed on the spot and two wounded, one of whom was the Spanish pilot of the *Teresa*, who received a slight bruise by a ball which grazed on his wrist. Indeed, another of the company, the Honourable Mr. Keppel, son to the Earl of Albemarle, had a very narrow escape; for having on a jockey cap, one side of the peak was shaved off close to his temple by a ball, which, however, did him no other injury. And now Lieutenant Brett, after this success, placed a guard at the fort, and another at the Governor's house, and appointed sentinels at all the avenues of the town, both to prevent any surprise from the enemy, and to secure the effects in the place from being embezzled. And this being done, his next care was to seize on the custom-house where the treasure lay, and to examine if any of the inhabitants remained in the town, that he might know what further precautions it was necessary to take. But he soon found that the numbers left behind were no ways formidable; for the greatest part of them (being in bed when the place was surprised) had run away with so much precipitation that they had not given themselves time to put on their clothes. And in this precipitate rout the Governor was not the last to secure himself for he fled betimes, half-naked. The few inhabitants who remained were confined in one of the churches under a guard, except some stout Negroes who were found in the place. These, instead of being shut up, were employed the remaining part of the night to assist in carrying the treasure from the custom-house and other places to the fort. However, there was care taken that they should be always attended by a file of musketeers.

The transporting the treasure from the custom-house to the fort was the principal occupation of Mr. Brett's people after he had got possession of the place. But the sailors, while they were thus employed, could not be prevented from entering the houses which lay near them in search of private pillage. And the first things which occurred to them being the clothes which the Spaniards in their flight had left behind them, and which, according to the custom of the country, were most of them either embroidered or laced, our people eagerly seized these glittering habits, and put them on over their own dirty trousers and jackets; not forgetting, at the same time, the tie or bag-wig, and laced hat, which were generally found with the clothes. When this practice was once begun there was no preventing the whole detachment from imitating it; and those who came latest into the fashion, not finding men's clothes sufficient to equip themselves, were obliged to take up with women's gowns and petticoats, which (provided there was finery enough) they made no scruple of putting on and blending with their own greasy dress. So that, when a party of them thus ridiculously metamorphosed first appeared before Mr. Brett, he was extremely surprised at their appearance and could not immediately be satisfied they were his own people.

Page 57

CHAPTER 19.

THE ATTACK ON PAITA (CONTINUED)—KIND TREATMENT AND RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS—THEIR GRATITUDE.

These were the transactions of our detachment on shore at Paita the first night; and now to return to what was done on board the *Centurion* in that interval. I must observe that after the boats were gone off we lay by till one o'clock in the morning, and then, supposing our detachment to be near landing, we made an easy sail for the bay. About seven in the morning we began to open the bay, and soon after we had a view of the town; and though we had no reason to doubt of the success of the enterprise, yet it was with great joy that we first discovered an infallible signal of the certainty of our hopes: this was by means of our perspectives, for through them we saw an English flag hoisted on the flagstaff of the fort, which to us was an incontestable proof that our people had got possession of the town. We plied into the bay with as much expedition as the wind, which then blew off shore, would permit us, and at eleven the *Trial's* boat came on board us, laden with dollars and church-plate; and the officer who commanded her informed us of the preceding night's transactions, such as we have already related them. About two in the afternoon we came to an anchor in ten fathoms and a half, at a mile and a half distance from the town, and were consequently near enough to have a more immediate intercourse with those on shore.

COLLECTING THE TREASURE.

And now we found that Mr. Brett had hitherto gone on in collecting and removing the treasure without interruption; but that the enemy had rendezvoused from all parts of the country on a hill at the back of the town, where they made no inconsiderable appearance; for, amongst the rest of their force, there were two hundred horse, seemingly very well armed and mounted, and, as we conceived, properly trained and regimented, being furnished with trumpets, drums, and standards. These troops paraded about the hill with great ostentation, sounding their military music and practising every art to intimidate us (as our numbers on shore were by this time not unknown to them), in hopes that we might be induced by our fears to abandon the place before the pillage was completed. But we were not so ignorant as to believe that this body of horse, which seemed to be what the enemy principally depended on, would dare to venture in streets and among houses, even had their numbers been three times as great; and therefore, notwithstanding their menaces, we went on, as long as the daylight lasted, calmly, in sending off the treasure and in employing the boats to carry on board the refreshments such as hogs, fowls, *etc.*, which we found here in great abundance. But at night, to prevent any surprise, the Commodore sent on shore a reinforcement, who posted themselves in all the streets leading to the parade; and for their greater security they traversed the streets with barricades six feet high; and the enemy continuing quiet all night, we at daybreak returned again to our labour of loading the boats and sending them off.

Page 58

On the second day of our being in possession of the place, several negro slaves deserted from the enemy on the hill, and coming into the town, voluntarily entered into our service. One of these was well known to a gentleman on board, who remembered him formerly at Panama. And the Spaniards without the town being in extreme want of water, many of their slaves crept into the place by stealth and carried away several jars of water to their masters on the hill; and though some of them were seized by our men in the attempt, yet the thirst amongst the enemy was so pressing that they continued this practice till we left the place. And now, on this second day, we were assured, both by the deserters and by these prisoners we took, that the Spaniards on the hill, who were by this time increased to a formidable number, had resolved to storm the town and fort the succeeding night, and that one Gordon, a Scotch Papist and captain of a ship in those seas, was to have the command of this enterprise. But we, notwithstanding, continued sending off our boats, and prosecuted our work without the least hurry or precipitation till the evening; and then a reinforcement was again sent on shore by the Commodore, and Lieutenant Brett doubled his guards at each of the barricades; and our posts being connected by means of sentinels placed within call of each other, and the whole being visited by frequent rounds, attended with a drum, these marks of our vigilance cooled their resolution and made them forget the vaunts of the preceding day; so that we passed the second night with as little molestation as we had done the first.

We had finished sending the treasure on board the Centurion the evening before, so that the third morning, being the 15th of November, the boats were employed in carrying off the most valuable part of the effects that remained in the town. And the Commodore intending to sail this day, he about ten o'clock, pursuant to his promise, sent all his prisoners, amounting to eighty-eight, on shore, giving orders to Lieutenant Brett to secure them in one of the churches under a strict guard till he was ready to embark his men.

THE BURNING OF PAITA.

Mr. Brett was at the same time ordered to set the whole town on fire, except the two churches (which by good fortune stood at some distance from the other houses), and then he was to abandon the place and to come on board. These orders were punctually complied with, for Mr. Brett immediately set his men to work to distribute pitch, tar, and other combustibles (of which great quantities were found here) into houses situated in different streets of the town, so that, the place being fired in many quarters at the same time, the destruction might be more violent and sudden, and the enemy, after our departure, might not be able to extinguish it. These preparations being made, he in the next place ordered the cannon which he found in the fort to be nailed up; and then, setting fire

Page 59

to those houses which were most windward, he collected his men and marched towards the beach, where the boats waited to carry them off. And the part of the beach where he intended to embark being an open place without the town, the Spaniards on the hill, perceiving he was retreating, resolved to try if they could not precipitate his departure. For this purpose a small squadron of their horse, consisting of about sixty, picked out as I suppose for this service, marched down the hill with much seeming resolution; so that, had we not been prepossessed with a juster opinion of their prowess, we might have suspected that, now we were on the open beach with no advantage of situation, they would certainly have charged us. But we presumed (and we were not mistaken) that this was mere ostentation; for, notwithstanding the pomp and parade they advanced with, Mr. Brett had no sooner ordered his men to halt and face about, but the enemy stopped their career and never dared to advance a step farther.

Our detachment under Lieutenant Brett having safely joined the squadron, the Commodore prepared to leave the place the same evening.

ENGLISH HUMANITY.

There remains, before I take leave of this place, another particularity to be mentioned, which, on account of the great honour which our national character in those parts has thence received, and the reputation which our Commodore in particular has thereby acquired, merits a distinct and circumstantial discussion. It has been already related that all the prisoners taken by us in our preceding prizes were put on shore and discharged at this place; amongst which there were some persons of considerable distinction, particularly a youth of about seventeen years of age, son of the Vice-President of the Council of Chili. As the barbarity of the buccaneers, and the artful use the ecclesiastics had made of it, had filled the natives of those countries with the most terrible ideas of the English cruelty, we always found our prisoners at their first coming on board us, to be extremely dejected and under great horror and anxiety. In particular, this youth whom I last mentioned, having never been from home before, lamented his captivity in the most moving manner, regretting in very plaintive terms his parents, his brothers, his sisters, and his native country, of all which he was fully persuaded he had taken his last farewell, believing that he was now devoted for the remaining part of his life to an abject and cruel servitude; none was he singular in his fears, for his companions on board, and indeed all the Spaniards that came into our power, had the same desponding opinion of their situation. Mr. Anson constantly exerted his utmost endeavours to efface these in human impressions they had received of us, always taking care that as many of the principal people among them as there was room for should dine at his table by turns, and giving the strictest orders, too, that they should at all times and in every circumstance

Page 60

be treated with the utmost decency and humanity. But, notwithstanding this precaution, it was generally observed that for the first day or two they did not quit their fears, but suspected the gentleness of their usage to be only preparatory to some unthought-of calamity. However, being confirmed by time, they grew perfectly easy in their situation and remarkably cheerful, so that it was often disputable whether or no they considered their being detained by us as a misfortune. For the youth I have above mentioned, who was near two months on board us, had at last so far conquered his melancholy surmises, and had taken such an affection to Mr. Anson, and seemed so much pleased with the manner of life, totally different from all he had ever seen before, that it is doubtful to me whether if his opinion had been taken, he would not have preferred a voyage to England in the *Centurion* to the being set on shore at Paita, where he was at liberty to return to his country and his friends.

This conduct of the Commodore to his prisoners, which was continued without interruption or deviation, gave them all the highest idea of his humanity and benevolence, and induced them likewise (as mankind are fond of forming general opinions) to entertain very favourable thoughts of the whole English nation.

All the prisoners left us with the strongest assurances of their grateful remembrance of his uncommon treatment. A Jesuit, in particular, whom the Commodore had taken, and who was an ecclesiastic of some distinction, could not help expressing himself with great thankfulness for the civilities he and his countrymen had found on board, declaring that he should consider it as his duty to do Mr. Anson justice at all times.

CHAPTER 20. A CLEVER TRICK. WATERING AT QUIBO. CATCHING THE TURTLE.

When we got under sail from the road of Paita we stood to the westward, and in the morning the Commodore gave orders that the whole squadron should spread themselves, in order to look out for the *Gloucester*; for we now drew near to the station where Captain Mitchel had been directed to cruise, and hourly expected to get sight of him, but the whole day passed without seeing him.

DOLLARS AMONGST THE COTTON.

At night having no sight of the *Gloucester*, the Commodore ordered the squadron to bring to, that we might not pass her in the dark. The next morning we again looked out for her, and at ten we saw a sail, to which we gave chase, and at two in the afternoon we came near enough her to discover her to be the *Gloucester*, with a small vessel in tow. About an hour after we were joined by them, and then we learned that Captain Mitchel in the whole time of his cruise, had only taken two prizes, one of them being a small snow, whose cargo consisted chiefly of wine, brandy, and olives in jars, with about 7,000 pounds in specie; and the other a large boat or launch which the *Gloucester's*

Page 61

barge came up with near the shore. The prisoners on board this vessel alleged that they were very poor and that their loading consisted only of cotton, though the circumstances in which the barge surprised them seemed to insinuate that they were more opulent than they pretended to be, for the Gloucester's people found them at dinner upon pigeon-pie served up in silver dishes. However, the officer who commanded the barge having opened several of the jars on board to satisfy his curiosity, and finding nothing in them but cotton, he was inclined to believe the account the prisoners gave him; but the cargo being taken into the Gloucester, and there examined more strictly, they were agreeably surprised to find that the whole was a very extraordinary piece of false package, and that there was concealed amongst the cotton, in every jar, a considerable quantity of double doubloons and dollars to the amount, in the whole, of near 12,000 pounds. This treasure was going to Paita, and belonged to the same merchants who were the proprietors of the greatest part of the money we had taken there; so that, had this boat escaped the Gloucester, it is probable her cargo would have fallen into our hands. Besides these two prizes which we have mentioned, the Gloucester's people told us that they had been in sight of two or three other ships of the enemy, which had escaped them; and one of them, we had reason to believe from some of our intelligence, was of an immense value.

Being now joined by the Gloucester and her prize, it was resolved that we should stand to the northwards, and get as soon as possible to the southern parts of California, or to the adjacent coast of Mexico, there to cruise for the Manila galleon, which we knew was now at sea, bound to the port of Acapulco. And we doubted not to get on that station time enough to intercept her, for this ship does not usually arrive at Acapulco till towards the middle of January, and we were now but in the middle of November, and did not conceive that our passage thither would cost us above a month or five weeks; so that we imagined we had near twice as much time as was necessary for our purpose. Indeed there was a business which we foresaw would occasions some delay, but we flattered ourselves that it would be despatched in four or five days, and therefore could not interrupt our project. This was the recruiting of our water. It was for some time a matter of deliberation where we should take in this necessary article, but by consulting the accounts of former navigators, and examining our prisoners, we at last resolved for the island of Quibo, situated at the mouth of the Bay of Panama.

Having determined, therefore, to go to Quibo, we directed our course to the northward.

On the 25th we had a sight of the island of Gallo, and hence we crossed the Bay of Panama. Being now in a rainy climate, which we had been long disused to, we found it necessary to caulk the sides of the Centurion, to prevent the rain-water from running into her. On the 3rd of December we had a view of the island of Quibo, and at seven in the evening of the 5th we came to an anchor in thirty-three fathoms.

Page 62

The next morning, after our coming to an anchor, an officer was despatched on shore to discover the watering-place, who having found it, returned before noon; and then we sent the long-boat for a load of water. This island of Quibo is extremely convenient for wooding and watering; for the trees grow close to the high-water mark and a large rapid stream of fresh water runs over the sandy beach into the sea, so that we were little more than two days in laying in all the wood and water we wanted.

CATCHING THE TURTLE.

The sea at this place furnished us with turtle in the greatest plenty and perfection. The green turtle is generally esteemed, by the greatest part of those who are acquainted with its taste, to be the most delicious of all eatables; and that it is a most wholesome food we are amply convinced by our own experience. For we fed on it for near four months, and consequently, had it been in any degree noxious, its ill effects could not possibly have escaped us.

At this island we took what quantity we pleased with great facility; for as they are an amphibious animal, and get on shore to lay their eggs, which they generally deposit in a large hole in the sand, just above the high-water mark, covering them up and leaving them to be hatched by the heat of the sun, we usually dispersed several of our men along the beach, whose business it was to turn them on their backs when they came to land; and the turtle being thereby prevented from getting away, we carried them off at our leisure. By this means we not only secured a sufficient stock for the time we stayed on the island, but we took a number of them with us to sea, which proved of great service both in lengthening out our store of provision, and in heartening the whole crew with an almost constant supply of fresh and palatable food. For the turtle being large, they generally weighing about 200 pounds weight each, those we took with us lasted us near a month, and by that time we met with a fresh recruit on the coast of Mexico, where we often saw them in the heat of the day floating in great numbers on the surface of the water fast asleep. When we discovered them, we usually sent out our boat with a man in the bow, who was a dexterous diver, and when the boat came within a few yards of the turtle, the diver plunged into the water, and took care to rise close upon it, seizing the shell near the tail, and pressing down the hinder parts. The turtle, when awakened, began to strike with its claws, which motion supported both it and the diver, till the boat came up and took them in. By this management we never wanted turtle for the succeeding four months in which we continued at sea.

CHAPTER 21.

DELAY AND DISAPPOINTMENT—CHASING A HEATH FIRE—ACAPULCO—THE
Manila
GALLEON—FRESH HOPES.

Page 63

On the 12th of December we stood from Quibo to the westward. We had little doubt of arriving soon upon our intended station,* as we expected, upon increasing our offing from Quibo, to fall in with the regular trade wind. But, to our extreme vexation, we were baffled for near a month, either with tempestuous weather from the western quarter, or with dead calms and heavy rains, attended with a sultry air. As our hopes were so long baffled, and our patience quite exhausted, we began at length to despair of succeeding in the great purpose we had in view, that of intercepting the Manila galleon; and this produced a general dejection amongst us, as we had at first considered this project as almost infallible, and had indulged ourselves in the most boundless hopes of the advantages we should thence receive. However, our despondency was at last somewhat alleviated by a favourable change of the wind; for on the 9th of January a gale for the first time sprang up from the north-east. As we advanced apace towards our station our hopes began to revive, for though the customary season of the arrival of the galleon at Acapulco was already elapsed, yet we were by this time unreasonable enough to flatter ourselves that some accidental delay might, for our advantage, lengthen out her passage beyond its usual limits. On the 26th of January, being then to the northward of Acapulco, we tacked and stood to the eastward, with a view of making the land.

(Note. Off Cape Corrientes (20 degrees 20 minutes north). Anson hoped to intercept the Manila galleon here.)

A MORTIFYING DELUSION.

We expected by our reckonings to have fallen in with it on the 28th; but though the weather was perfectly clear, we had no sight of it at sunset, and therefore we continued on our course, not doubting but we should see it by the next morning. About ten at night we discovered a light on the larboard-bow, bearing from us north-north-east. The Trial's prize, too, which was about a mile ahead of us, made a signal at the same time for seeing a sail; and as we had none of us any doubt but what we saw was a ship's light, we were all extremely animated with a firm persuasion that it was the Manila galleon, which had been so long the object of our wishes. And what added to our alacrity was our expectation of meeting with two of them instead of one, for we took it for granted that the light in view was carried in the top of one ship for a direction to her consort. We chased the light, keeping all our hands at their respective quarters, under an expectation of engaging in the next half-hour, as we sometimes conceived the chase to be about a mile distant, and at other times to be within reach of our guns; and some on board us positively averred that besides the light they could plainly discern her sails. The Commodore himself was so fully persuaded that we should be soon alongside of her, that he sent for his first Lieutenant, who commanded between decks, and directed him to see all the great

Page 64

guns loaded with two round-shot for the first broadside, and after that with one round-shot and one grape, strictly charging him at the same time not to suffer a gun to be fired till he, the Commodore, should give orders, which he informed the Lieutenant would not be till we arrived within pistol-shot of the enemy. In this constant and eager attention we continued all night, always presuming that another quarter of an hour would bring us up with this Manila ship, whose wealth, with that of her supposed consort, we now estimated by round millions. But when the morning broke and daylight came on, we were most strangely and vexatiously disappointed by finding that the light which had occasioned all this bustle and expectancy was only a fire on the shore. And yet I believe there was no person on board who doubted of its being a ship's light, or of its being near at hand. It was, indeed, upon a very high mountain, and continued burning for several days afterwards. It was not a volcano, but, rather, as I suppose, stubble or heath set on fire for some purpose of agriculture.

At sun-rising, after this mortifying delusion, we found ourselves about nine leagues off the land. On this land we observed two remarkable hummocks, such as are usually called paps; these a Spanish pilot and two Indians, who were the only persons amongst us that pretended to have traded in this part of the world, affirmed to be over the harbour of Acapulco. Indeed, we very much doubted their knowledge of the coast, for we found these paps to be in the latitude of 17 degrees 56 minutes, whereas those over Acapulco are said to be in 17 degrees only, and we afterwards found our suspicions of their skill to be well grounded.

And now, being in the track of the Manila galleon, it was a great doubt with us (as it was near the end of January) whether she was or was not arrived. And as we now began to want a harbour to refresh our people, the uncertainty of our present situation gave us great uneasiness, and we were very solicitous to get some positive intelligence, which might either set us at liberty to consult our necessities, if the galleon was arrived, or might animate us to continue on our present cruise with cheerfulness if she was not. With this view the Commodore, after examining our prisoners very particularly, resolved to send a boat, under colour of the night, into the harbour of Acapulco to see if the Manila ship was there or not. To execute this project, the barge was despatched the 6th of February. She did not return to us again till the 11th, when the officers acquainted Mr. Anson, that, agreeable to our suspicion, there was nothing like a harbour in the place where the Spanish pilots had at first asserted Acapulco to lie; that, when they had satisfied themselves in this particular, they steered to the eastward in hopes of discovering it, and had coasted along shore thirty-two leagues; that in this whole range they met chiefly with sandy beaches of a great length, over which the sea broke

Page 65

with so much violence that it was impossible for a boat to land; that at the end of their run they could just discover two paps at a very great distance to the eastward, which from their appearance and their latitude they concluded to be those in the neighbourhood of Acapulco, but that, not having a sufficient quantity of fresh water and provision for their passage thither and back again, they were obliged to return to the Commodore to acquaint him with their disappointment. On this intelligence we all made sail to the eastward, in order to get into the neighbourhood of that port, the Commodore resolving to send the barge a second time upon the same enterprise when we were arrived within a moderate distance. And the next day, which was the 12th of February, we being by that time considerably advanced, the barge was again despatched, and particular instructions given to the officers to preserve themselves from being seen from the shore. On the 19th of February she returned, and we found that we were indeed disappointed in our expectation of intercepting the galleon before her arrival at Acapulco; but we learned other circumstances which still revived our hopes, and which, we then conceived, would more than balance the opportunity we had already lost. For though our negro prisoners* informed us that the galleon arrived at Acapulco on our 9th of January, which was about twenty days before we fell in with this coast, yet they at the same time told us that the galleon had delivered her cargo and was taking in water and provisions for her return, and that the Viceroy of Mexico had by proclamation fixed her departure from Acapulco to the 14th of March, New Style.

(Note. Three negroes in a fishing canoe had been captured by the Centurion's barge off Acapulco harbour.)

This last news was most joyfully received by us, as we had no doubt but she must certainly fall into our hands, and as it was much more eligible to seize her on her return than it would have been to have taken her before her arrival, as the specie for which she had sold her cargo, and which she would now have on board, would be prodigiously more to be esteemed by us than the cargo itself, great part of which would have perished on our hands, and no part of it could have been disposed of by us at so advantageous a mart as Acapulco.

Thus we were a second time engaged in an eager expectation of meeting with this Manila ship, which, by the fame of its wealth, we had been taught to consider as the most desirable prize that was to be met with in any part of the globe.

CHAPTER 22. THE Manila* TRADE.

(Note. The capital of Luzon, the chief island of the Philippine group. The Philippines were discovered in 1521 by Magellan, who was killed there by the natives. They were annexed by Spain in 1571 and were ceded to the United States of America in 1898,

together with Cuba, after the brave but futile attempt of the Spaniards to preserve what were almost the last relics of their colonial dominions.)

Page 66

The trade carried on from Manila to China, and different parts of India, is principally for such commodities as are intended to supply the kingdoms of Mexico and Peru. These are spices; all sorts of Chinese silks and manufactures, particularly silk stockings, of which I have heard that no less than 50,000 pairs were the usual number shipped on board the annual ship; vast quantities of Indian stuffs—as calicoes and chintzes, which are much worn in America; together with other minuter articles—as goldsmith's work, *etc.*, which is principally done at the city of Manila itself by the Chinese, for it is said there are at least 20,000 Chinese who constantly reside there, either as servants, manufacturers, or brokers. All these different commodities are collected at Manila, thence to be transported annually in one or more ships to the port of Acapulco.

THE Manila SHIP.

This trade from Manila to Acapulco and back again is usually carried on in one or at most two annual ships, which set sail from Manila about July, arrive at Acapulco in the December, January, or February following, and, having there disposed of their effects, return for Manila some time in March, where they generally arrive in June, so that the whole voyage takes up very near an entire year. For this reason, though there is often no more than one ship employed at a time, yet there is always one ready for the sea when the other arrives, and therefore the commerce at Manila are provided with three or four stout ships that, in case of any accident, the trade may not be suspended. The largest of these ships, whose name I have not learned, is described as little less than one of our first-rate men-of-war, and indeed she must be of an enormous size, for it is known that when she was employed with other ships from the same port to cruise for our China trade, she had no less than 1,200 men on board. Their other ships, though far inferior in bulk to this, are yet stout, large vessels, of the burthen of 1,200 tons and upwards, and usually carry from 350 to 600 hands, passengers included, with fifty odd guns. As these are all King's ships, commissioned and paid by him, there is usually one of the captains who is styled the "General," and who carries the royal standard of Spain at the main-topgallant masthead.

The ship having received her cargo on board and being fitted for the sea, generally weighs from the mole of Cabite about the middle of July, taking advantage of the westerly monsoon which then sets in to carry them to sea. When they are clear of the islands they stand to the northward of the east, in order to get into the latitude of thirty odd degrees, when they expect to meet with westerly winds, before which they run away for the coast of California. It is most remarkable that, by the concurrent testimony of all the Spanish navigators, there is not one port, nor even a tolerable road, as yet found out betwixt the Philippine Islands and the coast of California and Mexico,* so that from the time the Manila ship first loses sight of land she never lets go her anchor till she arrives on the coast of California, and very often not till she gets to its southernmost extremity.

Page 67

(Note. The Sandwich Islands were discovered by Captain Cook in 1779. The Spanish ships had usually crossed the Pacific 9 or 10 degrees south of them.)

ACAPULCO.

The most usual time of the arrival of the galleon at Acapulco is towards the middle of January, but this navigation is so uncertain that she sometimes gets in a month sooner, and at other times has been detained at sea above a month longer. The port of Acapulco is by much the securest and finest in all the northern parts of the Pacific Ocean, being as it were, a basin surrounded with very high mountains, but the town is a most wretched place and extremely unhealthy, for the air about it is so pent up by the hills that it has scarcely any circulation. The place is, besides, destitute of fresh water, except what is brought from a considerable distance, and is in all respects so inconvenient that except at the time of the mart, whilst the Manila galleon is in the port, it is almost deserted. When the galleon arrives in this port she is generally moored on its western side, and her cargo is delivered with all possible expedition; and now the town of Acapulco, from almost a solitude, is immediately thronged with merchants from all parts of the kingdom of Mexico. The cargo being landed and disposed of, the silver and the goods intended for Manila are taken on board, together with provisions and water, and the ship prepares to put to sea with the utmost expedition. There is indeed no time to be lost, for it is an express order to the captain to be out of the port of Acapulco on his return before the first day of April, New Style.

And having mentioned the goods intended for Manila, I must observe that the principal return is always made in silver, and consequently the rest of the cargo is but of little account; the other articles, besides the silver, being some cochineal and a few sweetmeats, the produce of the American settlements, together with European millinery ware for the women at Manila, and some Spanish wines. And this difference in the cargo of the ship to and from Manila occasions a very remarkable variety in the manner of equipping the ship for these two different voyages. For the galleon, when she sets sail from Manila, being deep laden with a variety of bulky goods, has not the conveniency of mounting her lower tier of guns, but carries them in her hold till she draws near Cape St. Lucas and is apprehensive of an enemy. Her hands, too, are as few as is consistent with the safety of the ship, that she may be less pestered with the stowage of provisions. But on her return from Acapulco, as her cargo lies in less room, her lower tier is, or ought to be, always mounted before she leaves the port, and her crew is augmented with a supply of sailors and with one or two companies of foot, which are intended to reinforce the garrison at Manila. And there being, besides, many merchants who take their passage to Manila on board the galleon, her whole number of hands on her return is usually little short of six hundred, all which are easily provided for by reason of the small stowage necessary for the silver.

Page 68

The galleon being thus fitted for her return, the captain, on leaving the port of Acapulco, steers for the latitude of 13 or 14 degrees, and runs on that parallel till he gets sight of the island of Guam, one of the Ladrones. The captain is told in his instructions that, to prevent his passing the Ladrones in the dark, there are orders given that thorough all the month of June fires shall be lighted every night on the highest part of Guam and Rota, and kept in till the morning. At Guam there is a small Spanish garrison, purposely intended to secure that place for the refreshment of the galleon and to yield her all the assistance in their power. However, the danger of the road at Guam is so great, that though the galleon is ordered to call there, yet she rarely stays above a day or two, but getting her water and refreshments on board as soon as possible, she steers away directly for Cape Espiritu Santo, on the island of Samal.*

TELEGRAPHY BY BEACON.

Here the captain is again ordered to look out for signals, and he is told that sentinels will be posted, not only on that cape, but likewise in Catanduanas, Butusan, Birriborongo, and on the island of Batan. These sentinels are instructed to make a fire when they discover the ship, which the captain is carefully to observe; for if after this first fire is extinguished he perceives that four or more are lighted up again, he is then to conclude that there are enemies on the coast, and on this he is immediately to endeavour to speak with the sentinel on shore, and to procure from him more particular intelligence of their force and of the station they cruise in, pursuant to which he is to regulate his conduct, and to endeavour to gain some secure port amongst those islands without coming in sight of the enemy; and in case he should be discovered when in port, and should be apprehensive of an attack, he is then to land his treasure and to take some of his artillery on shore for its defence, not neglecting to send frequent and particular accounts to the city of Manila of all that passes. But if after the first fire on shore the captain observes that two others only are made by the sentinels, he is then to conclude that there is nothing to fear, and he is to pursue his course without interruption, and to make the best of his way to the port of Cabite, which is the port to the city of Manila, and the constant station for all the ships employed in this commerce to Acapulco.

(Note. Samal or Samar is an island about the centre of the Philippines, north of Mindanao.)

CHAPTER 23. WAITING FOR THE GALLEON—DISAPPOINTMENT—CHEQUETAN.

On the 1st of March we made the highlands over Acapulco, and got with all possible expedition into the situation prescribed by the Commodore's orders.*

(Note. The two men-of-war and the three prizes were arranged out of sight of the land in "a circular line," the two extremities of which were thirty-six miles apart. Within this line, and much nearer to the port, especially at night, were two cutters, whose duty it was to watch the mouth of the harbour and signal to the ships outside them.)

Page 69

And now we expected with the utmost impatience the 3rd of March, the day fixed for her departure. And on that day we were all of us most eagerly engaged in looking out towards Acapulco; and we were so strangely prepossessed with the certainty of our intelligence, and with an assurance of her coming out of port, that some or other on board us were constantly imagining that they discovered one of our cutters returning with a signal. But to our extreme vexation, both this day and the succeeding night passed over without any news of the galleon. However, we did not yet despair, but were all heartily disposed to flatter ourselves that some unforeseen accident had intervened which might have put off her departure for a few days; and suggestions of this kind occurred in plenty, as we knew that the time fixed by the Viceroy for her sailing was often prolonged on the petition of the merchants of Mexico. Thus we kept up our hopes, and did not abate of our vigilance; and as the 7th of March was Sunday, the beginning of Passion Week, which is observed by the Papists with great strictness and a total cessation from all kinds of labour, so that no ship is permitted to stir out of port during the whole week, this quieted our apprehensions for some days, and disposed us not to expect the galleon till the week following. On the Friday in this week our cutters returned to us, and the officers on board them were very confident that the galleon was still in port, for that she could not possibly have come out but they must have seen her. On the Monday morning succeeding Passion Week—that is, on the 15th of March—the cutters were again despatched to their old station, and our hopes were once more indulged in as sanguine prepossessions as before; but in a week's time our eagerness was greatly abated, and a general dejection and despondency took place in its room. For we were persuaded that the enemy had by some accident discovered our being upon the coast, and had therefore laid an embargo on the galleon till the next year. And indeed this persuasion was but too well founded; for we afterwards learned that our barge, when sent on the discovery of the port of Acapulco, had been seen from the shore, and that this circumstance (no embarkations but canoes ever frequenting that coast) was to them a sufficient proof of the neighbourhood of our squadron, on which they stopped the galleon till the succeeding year.

SHORT OF WATER.

When we had taken up the cutters, all the ships being joined, the Commodore made a signal to speak with their commanders, and upon enquiry into the stock of fresh water remaining on board the squadron, it was found to be so very slender that we were under necessity of quitting our station to procure a fresh supply. And consulting what place was the properest for this purpose, it was agreed that the harbour of Seguataneo, or Chequetan, being the nearest to us, was on that account the most eligible, and it was therefore immediately resolved to make the best of

Page 70

our way thither. By the 1st of April we were so far advanced towards Seguataneo that we thought it expedient to send out two boats, that they might range along the coast and discover the watering-place. They were gone some days, and our water being now very short, it was a particular felicity to us that we met with daily supplies of turtle; for had we been entirely confined to salt provisions, we must have suffered extremely in so warm a climate. Indeed, our present circumstances were sufficiently alarming, and gave the most considerate amongst us as much concern as any of the numerous perils we had hitherto encountered; for our boats, as we conceived by their not returning, had not as yet discovered a place proper to water at, and by the leakage of our casks and other accidents we had not ten days' water on board the whole squadron; so that, from the known difficulty of procuring water on this coast, and the little reliance we had on the buccaneer writers (the only guides we had to trust to), we were apprehensive of being soon exposed to a calamity, the most terrible of any in the long, disheartening catalogue of the distresses of a seafaring life.

But these gloomy suggestions were soon happily ended, for our boats returned on the 5th of April, having discovered a place proper for our purpose about seven miles to the westward of the rocks of Seguataneo, which by the description they gave of it, appeared to be the port called by Dampier* the harbour of Chequetan. On the 7th we stood in, and that evening came to an anchor in eleven fathoms. Thus, after a four months' continuance at sea from the leaving of Quibo, and having but six days' water on board, we arrived in the harbour of Chequetan.

(Note. Dampier (1652 to 1715), the son of a tenant farmer, near Yeovil, played many parts in his time. He was a buccaneer, a pirate, a circumnavigator, an author, a captain in the navy and an hydrographer. His 'Voyage Round the World', published in 1697, procured him a command in the navy; but though an excellent seaman, he proved an incapable commander, as his buccaneer comrades had doubtless foreseen, for he had never been entrusted with any command among them.)

CHAPTER 24. THE PRIZES SCUTTLED—NEWS OF THE SQUADRON REACHES ENGLAND—BOUND FOR CHINA.

The next morning after our coming to an anchor in the harbour of Chequetan, we sent about ninety of our men well armed on shore, forty of whom were ordered to march into the country, and the remaining fifty were employed to cover the watering-place and to prevent any interruption from the natives. Here it was agreed after a mature consultation to destroy the Trial's prize, as well as the Carmelo and Carmen, whose fate had been before resolved on. Indeed, the ship was in good repair and fit for the sea; but as the whole number on board our squadron did not amount to the complement of a fourth-rate man-of-war, we

Page 71

found it was impossible to divide them into three ships without rendering them incapable of navigating in safety in the tempestuous weather we had reason to expect on the coast of China, where we supposed we should arrive about the time of the change of the monsoons. These considerations determined the Commodore to destroy the Trial's prize and to reinforce the Gloucester with the greatest part of her crew. And in consequence of this resolve, all the stores on board the Trial's prize were removed into the other ships, and the prize herself, with the Carmelo and Carmen, were prepared for scuttling with all the expedition we were masters of. But the great difficulties we were under in laying in a store of water, together with the necessary repairs of our rigging and other unavoidable occupations, took us up so much time, and found us such unexpected employment, that it was near the end of April before we were in a condition to leave the place.

During our stay here there happened an incident which proved the means of convincing our friends in England of our safety, which for some time they had despaired of and were then in doubt about. From this harbour of Chequetan there was but one pathway, which led through the woods into the country. This we found much beaten, and were thence convinced that it was well known to the inhabitants. As it passed by the spring-head, and was the only avenue by which the Spaniards could approach us, we, at some distance beyond the spring-head, felled several large trees and laid them one upon the other across the path, and at this barricade we constantly kept a guard, and we, besides, ordered our men employed in watering to have their arms ready and, in case of any alarm, to march instantly to this spot; and though our principal intention was to prevent our being disturbed by any sudden attack of the enemy's horse, yet it answered another purpose which was not in itself less important, this was to hinder our own people from straggling singly into the country, where we had reason to believe they would be surprised by the Spaniards, who would doubtless be extremely solicitous to pick up some of them in hopes of getting intelligence of our future designs. To avoid this inconvenience, the strictest orders were given to the sentinels to let no person whatever pass beyond their post.

THE COMMODORE'S COOK.

But, notwithstanding this precaution, we missed one Lewis Leger, who was the Commodore's cook, and as he was a Frenchman, and suspected to be a Papist, it was by some imagined that he had deserted with a view of betraying all that he knew to the enemy; but this appeared by the event to be an ill-grounded surmise, for it was afterwards known that he had been taken by some Indians, who carried him prisoner to Acapulco, whence he was transferred to Mexico and then to Vera Cruz, where he was shipped on board a vessel bound to Old Spain; and the vessel being obliged by some accident to put into Lisbon, Leger escaped on shore,

Page 72

and was by the British consul sent thence to England, where he brought the first authentic account of the safety of the Commodore, and of what he had done in the South Seas. The relation he gave of his own seizure was that he had rambled into the woods at some distance from the barricade, where he had first attempted to pass, but had been stopped and threatened to be punished; that his principal view was to get a quantity of limes for his master's store, and that in this occupation he was surprised unawares by four Indians, who stripped him naked and carried him in that condition to Acapulco, exposed to the scorching heat of the sun, which at that time of the year shone with its greatest violence. And afterwards at Mexico his treatment in prison was sufficiently severe, and the whole course of his captivity was a continued instance of the hatred which the Spaniards bear to all those who endeavour to disturb them in the peaceable possession of the coasts of the South Seas. Indeed, Leger's fortune was, upon the whole, extremely singular, for after the hazards he had run in the Commodore's squadron, and the severities he had suffered in his long confinement amongst the enemy, a more fatal disaster attended him on his return to England; for though, when he arrived in London, some of Mr. Anson's friends interested themselves in relieving him from the poverty to which his captivity had reduced him, yet he did not long enjoy the benefit of their humanity, for he was killed in an insignificant night brawl, the cause of which could scarcely be discovered.

On the 28th of April the Centurion and the Gloucester weighed anchor. Being now in the offing of Chequetan, bound across the vast Pacific Ocean in our way to China, we were impatient to run off the coast as soon as possible, as the stormy season was approaching apace, and we had no further views in the American seas.

The sending away our prisoners* was our last transaction on the American coast, for no sooner had we parted with them than we and the Gloucester made sail to the south-west, proposing to get a good offing from the land, where we hoped in a few days to meet with the regular trade-wind. It has been esteemed no uncommon passage to run from hence to the easternmost parts of Asia in two months, and we flattered ourselves that we were as capable of making an expeditious passage as any ship that had ever run this course before us; so that we hoped soon to gain the coast of China. On the 6th of May we for the last time lost sight of the mountains of Mexico, persuaded that in a few weeks we should arrive at the river of Canton in China, where we expected to meet with many English ships, and numbers of our countrymen, and hoped to enjoy the advantages of an amicable, well-frequented spot, inhabited by a polished people, and abounding with the conveniences and indulgences of a civilised life—blessings which now for nearly twenty months had never been once in our power.

Page 73

(Note. Before leaving the American coast for China, Anson released fifty-seven of his prisoners, including all the Spaniards, and sent them to Acapulco. A certain number of natives were retained to assist in working the ships. There had been some previous attempt at correspondence between Anson and the Spanish governor of Acapulco. The latter, with Spanish courtesy, when answering Anson's letter, despatched with his answer "a present of two boats laden with the choicest refreshments and provisions which were to be found in Acapulco." Unfortunately the boats were unable to find Anson, and he never received either the letter or the present.)

CHAPTER 25. DELAYS AND ACCIDENTS—SCURVY AGAIN—A LEAK—THE GLOUCESTER ABANDONED.

When on the 6th of May, 1742, we left the coast of America, we stood to the south-west with a view of meeting with the north-east trade wind, which the accounts of former writers made us expect at seventy or eighty leagues distance from the land. We had, besides, another reason for standing to the southward, which was the getting into the latitude of 13 or 14 degrees north, that being the parallel where the Pacific Ocean is most usually crossed, and consequently where the navigation is esteemed the safest. This last purpose we had soon answered, being in a day or two sufficiently advanced to the south. At the same time we were also farther from the shore than we had presumed was necessary for falling in with the tradewind; but in this particular we were most grievously disappointed, for the wind still continued to the westward, or at best variable. As the getting into the north-east trade was to us a matter of the last consequence, we stood more to the southward, and made many experiments to meet with it, but all our efforts were for a long time unsuccessful, so that it was seven weeks from our leaving the coast before we got into the true trade wind.

CONTRARY AND VARIABLE WINDS.

This was an interval in which we believed we should well-nigh have reached the easternmost parts of Asia, but we were so baffled with the contrary and variable winds which for all that time perplexed us, that we were not as yet advanced above a fourth part of the way. The delay alone would have been a sufficient mortification, but there were other circumstances attending it which rendered this situation not less terrible, and our apprehensions perhaps still greater, than in any of our past distresses, for our two ships were by this time extremely crazy, and many days had not passed before we discovered a spring in the foremast of the Centurion, which rounded about twenty-six inches of its circumference, and which was judged to be at least four inches deep; and no sooner had our carpenters secured this with fishing it but the Gloucester made a signal of distress, and we learned that she had a dangerous spring in her mainmast, so that she could

Page 74

not carry any sail upon it. Our carpenters, on a strict examination of this mast, found it so very rotten and decayed that they judged it necessary to cut it down as low as it appeared to have been injured, and by this it was reduced to nothing but a stump, which served only as a step to the topmast. These accidents augmented our delay and occasioned us great anxiety about our future security, for on our leaving the coast of Mexico the scurvy had begun to make its appearance again amongst our people, though from our departure from Juan Fernandez we had till then enjoyed a most uninterrupted state of health. We too well knew the effects of this disease from our former fatal experience to suppose that anything but a speedy passage could secure the greater part of our crew from perishing by it, and as, after being seven weeks at sea, there did not appear any reasons that could persuade us we were nearer the trade wind than when we first set out, there was no ground for us to suppose but our passage would prove at least three times as long as we at first expected, and consequently we had the melancholy prospect either of dying by the scurvy or perishing with the ship for want of hands to navigate her.

SLOW PROGRESS.

When we reached the trade wind, and it settled between the north and the east, yet it seldom blew with so much strength but the Centurion might have carried all her small sails abroad with the greatest safety, so that now, had we been a single ship, we might have run down our longitude apace, and have reached the Ladrones soon enough to have recovered great numbers of our men who afterwards perished. But the Gloucester, by the loss of her mainmast, sailed so very heavily that we had seldom any more than our topsails set, and yet were frequently obliged to lie to for her, and I conceive that in the whole we lost little less than a month by our attendance upon her, in consequence of the various mischances she encountered. In all this run it was remarkable that we were rarely many days together without seeing great numbers of birds, which is a proof that there are many islands, or at least rocks, scattered all along at no very considerable distance from our track. Some indeed there are marked in Spanish charts, but the frequency of the birds seems to evince that there are many more than have been hitherto discovered, for the greatest part of the birds, we observed, were such as are known to roost on shore, and the manner of their appearance sufficiently made out that they came from some distant haunt every morning, and returned thither again in the evening, for we never saw them early or late, and the hour of their arrival and departure gradually varied, which we supposed was occasioned by our running nearer their haunts or getting farther from them.

Page 75

The trade wind continued to favour us without any fluctuation from the end of June till towards the end of July, but on the 26th of July, being then, as we esteemed, about three hundred leagues distant from the Ladrones, we met with a westerly wind, which did not come about again to the eastward in four days' time. This was a most dispiriting incident, as it at once damped all our hopes of speedy relief, especially, too, as it was attended with a vexatious accident to the Gloucester, for in one part of those four days the wind flattened to a calm, and the ships rolled very deep, by which means the Gloucester's forecap split and her topmast came by the board and broke her foreyard directly in the slings. As she was hereby rendered incapable of making any sail for some time, we were obliged, as soon as a gale sprung up, to take her in tow, and near twenty of the healthiest and ablest of our seaman were taken from the business of our own ship and were employed for eight or ten days together on board the Gloucester in repairing her damages. But these things, mortifying as we thought them, were but the beginning of our disasters, for scarce had our people finished their business in the Gloucester before we met with a most violent storm in the western board, which obliged us to lie to. In the beginning of this storm our ship sprung a leak, and let in so much water that all our people, officers included, were employed continually in working the pumps, and the next day we had the vexation to see the Gloucester with her topmast once more by the board, and whilst we were viewing her with great concern for this new distress we saw her main-topmast, which had hitherto served as a jury mainmast, share the same fate. This completed our misfortunes and rendered them without resource, for we knew the Gloucester's crew were so few and feeble that without our assistance they could not be relieved, and our sick were now so far increased, and those that remained in health so continually fatigued with the additional duty of our pumps, that it was impossible for us to lend them any aid. Indeed, we were not as yet fully apprised of the deplorable situation of the Gloucester's crew, for when the storm abated (which during its continuance prevented all communication with them) the Gloucester bore up under our stern, and Captain Mitchel informed the Commodore that besides the loss of his masts, which was all that had appeared to us, the ship had then no less than seven feet of water in her hold, although his officers and men had been kept constantly at the pump for the last twenty-four hours, and that her crew was greatly reduced, for there remained alive on board her no more than seventy-seven men, eighteen boys, and two prisoners, officers included, and that of this whole number only sixteen men and eleven boys were capable of keeping the deck, and several of these very infirm.

THUS PERISHED H.M.S. GLOUCESTER.

Page 76

It plainly appeared that there was no possibility of preserving the Gloucester any longer, as her leaks were irreparable, and the united hands on board both ships capable of working would not be able to free her, even if our own ship should not employ any part of them. The only step to be taken was the saving the lives of the few that remained on board the Gloucester, and getting out of her as much as was possible before she was destroyed; and therefore the Commodore immediately sent an order to Captain Mitchel, as the weather was now calm and favourable, to send his people on board the Centurion as expeditiously as he could and to take out such stores as he could get at whilst the ship could be kept above water. And as our leak required less attention whilst the present easy weather continued, we sent our boats, with as many men as we could spare, to Captain Mitchel's assistance.

It was the 15th of August, in the evening, before the Gloucester was cleared of everything that was proposed to be removed; and though the hold was now almost full of water, yet as the carpenters were of opinion that she might still swim for some time if the calm should continue and the water become smooth, she was set on fire; for we knew not how near we might now be to the island of Guam, which was in the possession of our enemies, and the wreck of such a ship would have been to them no contemptible acquisition. When she was set on fire Captain Mitchel and his officers left her and came on board the Centurion, and we immediately stood from the wreck, not without some apprehensions (as we had now only a light breeze) that, if she blew up soon, the concussion of the air might damage our rigging; but she fortunately burned, though very fiercel, the whole night, her guns firing successively as the flames reached them. And it was six in the morning, when we were about four leagues distant, before she blew up. The report she made upon this occasion was but a small one, but there was an exceeding black pillar of smoke, which shot up into the air to a very considerable height. Thus perished His Majesty's ship the Gloucester.

CHAPTER 26. THE LADRONES SIGHTED—TINIAN.

The 23rd, at daybreak, we were cheered with the discovery of two islands in the western board. This gave us all great joy, and raised our drooping spirits, for before this a universal dejection had seized us, and we almost despaired of ever seeing land again. The nearest of these islands we afterwards found to be Anatacan. The other was the island of Serigan, and had rather the appearance of a high rock than a place we could hope to anchor at. We were extremely impatient to get in with the nearest island, where we expected to meet with anchoring ground and an opportunity of refreshing our sick; but the wind proved so variable all day, and there was so little of it, that we advanced towards it but slowly. However, by the next morning

Page 77

we were got so far to the westward that we were in view of a third island, which was that of Paxaros, though marked in the chart only as a rock. This was small and very low land, and we had passed within less than a mile of it in the night without seeing it. And now at noon, being within four miles of the island of Anatacan, the boat was sent away to examine the anchoring ground and the produce of the place, and we were not a little solicitous for her return, as we then conceived our fate to depend upon the report we should receive; for the other two islands were obviously enough incapable of furnishing us with any assistance, and we knew not then that there were any others which we could reach. In the evening the boat came back, and the crew informed us that there was no place for a ship to anchor.

This account of the impossibility of anchoring at this island occasioned a general melancholy on board, for we considered it as little less than the prelude to our destruction; and now the only possible circumstance that could secure the few that remained alive from perishing was the accidental falling in with some other of the Ladrone Islands better prepared for our accommodation, and as our knowledge of these islands was extremely imperfect, we were to trust entirely to chance for our guidance; only, as they are all of them usually laid down near the same meridian, and we had conceived those we had already seen to be part of them, we concluded to stand to the southward as the most probable means of falling in with the next. Thus, with the most gloomy persuasion of our approaching destruction, we stood from the island of Anatacan, having all of us the strongest apprehensions either of dying of the scurvy or perishing with the ship, which, for want of hands to work her pumps, might in a short time be expected to founder.

TINIAN.

It was the 26th of August, 1742, in the morning, when we lost sight of Anatacan. The next morning we discovered three other islands to the eastward, which were from ten to fourteen leagues from us. These were, as we afterwards learned, the islands of Saypan, Tinian and Aguigan. We immediately steered towards Tinian, which was the middle-most of the three, but had so much of calms and light airs, that though we were helped forwards by the currents, yet next day at daybreak we were at least five leagues distant from it. However, we kept on our course, and about ten in the morning we perceived a proa under sail to the southward, between Tinian and Aguigan. As we imagined from hence that these islands were inhabited, and knew that the Spaniards had always a force at Guam, we took the necessary precautions for our own security and for preventing the enemy from taking advantage of our present wretched circumstances, of which they would be sufficiently informed by the manner of our working the ship. We therefore mustered all our hands who were capable of standing to their arms and loaded our upper and quarter-deck

Page 78

guns with grapeshot, and that we might the more readily procure some intelligence of the state of these islands, we showed Spanish colours and hoisted a red flag at the foretop masthead, to give our ship the appearance of the Manila galleon, hoping thereby to decoy some of the inhabitants on board us. Thus preparing ourselves, and standing towards the land, we were near enough at three in the afternoon to send the cutter in shore to find out a proper berth for the ship, and we soon perceived that a proa came off the shore to meet the cutter, fully persuaded, as we afterwards found, that we were the Manila ship. As we saw the cutter returning back with the proa in tow, we immediately sent the pinnace to receive the proa and the prisoners, and to bring them on board that the cutter might proceed on her errand. The pinnace came back with a Spaniard and four Indians, who were the people taken in the proa. The Spaniard was immediately examined as to the produce and circumstances of this island of Tinian, and his account of it surpassed even our most sanguine hopes, for he informed us that it was uninhabited, which, in our present defenceless condition, was an advantage not to be despised, especially as it wanted but few of the conveniences that could be expected in the most cultivated country; for he assured us that there was great plenty of very good water, and that there were an incredible number of cattle, hogs, and poultry, running wild on the island, all of them excellent in their kind; that the woods produced sweet and sour oranges, limes, lemons, and cocoa-nuts in great plenty, besides a fruit peculiar to these islands (called by Dampier breadfruit); that, from the quantity and goodness of the provisions produced here, the Spaniards at Guam made use of it as a store for supplying the garrison; that he himself was a sergeant of that garrison, and was sent here with twenty-two Indians to jerk beef, which he was to load for Guam on board a small bark of about fifteen tons which lay at anchor near the shore.

PLEASING SCENES.

This account was received by us with inexpressible joy. Part of it we were ourselves able to verify on the spot, as we were by this time near enough to discover several numerous herds of cattle feeding in different places of the island, and we did not anyways doubt the rest of his relation, as the appearance of the shore prejudiced us greatly in its favour, and made us hope that not only our necessities might be there fully relieved and our diseased recovered, but that amidst those pleasing scenes which were then in view, we might procure ourselves some amusement and relaxation after the numerous fatigues we had undergone.

The Spanish sergeant, from whom we received the account of the island, having informed us that there were some Indians on shore under his command employed in jerking beef, and that there was a bark at anchor to take it on board, we were desirous, if possible, to prevent the Indians from escaping, who doubtless would have given the Governor of Guam intelligence of our arrival, and we therefore immediately despatched the pinnace to secure the bark, which the sergeant told us was the only embarkation on

the place. And then, about eight in the evening, we let go our anchor in twenty-two fathoms.

Page 79

CHAPTER 27. LANDING THE SICK. CENTURION DRIVEN TO SEA.

When we had furled our sails, the remaining part of the night was allowed to our people for their repose, to recover them from the fatigue they had undergone, and in the morning a party was sent on shore well armed, of which I myself was one, to make ourselves masters of the landing-place, as we were not certain what opposition might be made by the Indians on the island. We landed without difficulty, for the Indians having perceived by our seizure of the bark the night before, that we were enemies, they immediately fled into the woody parts of the island. We found on shore many huts which they had inhabited, and which saved us both the time and trouble of erecting tents. One of these huts, which the Indians made use of for a storehouse, was very large, being twenty yards long and fifteen broad; this we immediately cleared of some bales of jerked beef which we found in it, and converted it into an hospital for our sick, who, as soon as the place was ready to receive them, were brought on shore, being in all one hundred and twenty-eight. Numbers of these were so very helpless that we were obliged to carry them from the boats to the hospital upon our shoulders, in which humane employment (as before at Juan Fernandez) the Commodore himself and every one of his officers were engaged without distinction; and notwithstanding the great debility of the greatest part of our sick, it is almost incredible how soon they began to feel the salutary influence of the land. For though we buried twenty-one men on this and the preceding day, yet we did not lose above ten men more during our whole two months' stay here; and in general our diseased received so much benefit from the fruits of the island, particularly the fruits of the acid kind, that in a week's time there were but few who were not so far recovered as to be able to move about without help; and on the 12th of September all those who were so far relieved as to be capable of doing duty were sent on board the ship. And then the Commodore, who was himself ill of the scurvy, had a tent erected for him on shore, where he went with the view of staying a few days for the recovery of his health, being convinced, by the general experience of his people, that no other method but living on the land was to be trusted to for the removal of this dreadful malady. As the crew on board were now reinforced by the recovered hands returned from the island, we began to send our casks on shore to be fitted up, which till now could not be done, for the coopers were not well enough to work. We likewise weighed our anchors that we might examine our cables, which we suspected had by this time received considerable damage. And as the new moon was now approaching, when we apprehended violent gales, the Commodore, for our greater security, ordered that part of the cables next to the anchors to be armed with the chains of the fire-grapnels, and they were besides cackled twenty fathoms from the anchors and seven fathoms from the service, with a good rounding of a 4 1/2 inch hawser, and to all these precautions we added that of lowering the main and fore yards close down, that in case of blowing weather the wind might have less power upon the ship to make her ride a-strain.

Page 80

A FURIOUS STORM.

Thus effectually prepared, as we conceived, we expected the new moon, which was the 18th of September; and riding safe that and the three succeeding days (though the weather proved very squally and uncertain), we flattered ourselves (for I was then on board) that the prudence of our measures had secured us from all accidents. But on the 22nd the wind blew from the eastward with such fury that we soon despaired of riding out the storm; and therefore we should have been extremely glad that the Commodore and the rest of our people on shore, which were the greatest of our hands, had been on board with us, since our only hopes of safety seemed to depend on our putting immediately to sea. But all communication with the shore was now effectually cut off, for there was no possibility that a boat could live so that we were necessitated to ride it out till our cables parted. Indeed, it was not long before this happened, for the small bower parted at five in the afternoon, and the ship swung off to the best bower; and as the night came on the violence of the wind still increased. But, notwithstanding its inexpressible fury, the tide ran with so much rapidity as to prevail over it; for the tide, having set to the northward in the beginning of the storm, turned suddenly to the southward about six in the evening, and forced the ship before it in despite of the storm, which blew upon the beam. And now the sea broke most surprisingly all round us, and a large tumbling swell threatened to poop us; the long-boat, which was at this time moored astern, was on a sudden canted so high that it broke the transom of the Commodore's gallery, and would doubtless have risen as high as the taffrail had it not been for this stroke which stove the boat all to pieces; but the poor boat-keeper, though extremely bruised, was saved almost by miracle. About eight the tide slackened, but the wind did not abate; so that at eleven the best bower cable, by which alone we rode, parted. Our sheet anchor, which was the only one we had left, was instantly cut from the bow; but before it could reach the bottom we were driven from twenty-two into thirty-five fathoms; and after we had veered away one whole cable and two-thirds of another, we could not find ground with sixty fathoms of line. This was a plain indication that the anchor lay near the edge of the bank, and could not hold us long.

In this pressing danger Mr. Suamarez, our first lieutenant, who now commanded on board, ordered several guns to be fired and lights to be shown, as a signal to the Commodore of our distress; and in a short time after, it being then about one o'clock, and the night excessively dark, a strong gust, attended with rain and lightning, drove us off the bank and forced us out to sea, leaving behind us on the island Mr. Anson, with many more of our officers, and great part of our crew, amounting in the whole to one hundred and thirteen persons. Thus were we all, both at sea and on shore, reduced to the utmost despair by this catastrophe; those on shore conceiving they had no means left them ever to leave the island, and we on board utterly unprepared to struggle with the fury of the seas and winds we were now exposed to, and expecting each moment to be our last.

Page 81

CHAPTER 28. ANSON CHEERS HIS MEN—PLANS FOR ESCAPE—RETURN OF THE CENTURION.

The storm which drove the Centurion to sea blew with too much turbulence to permit of either the Commodore or any of the people on shore hearing the guns which she fired as signals of distress, and the frequent glare of the lightning had prevented the explosions from being observed; so that when at daybreak it was perceived from the shore that the ship was missing, there was the utmost consternation amongst them. For much the greatest part of them immediately concluded that she was lost, and entreated the Commodore that the boat might be sent round the island to look for the wreck; and those who believed her safe had scarcely any expectation that she would ever be able to make the island again; for the wind continued to blow strong at east, and they knew how poorly she was manned and provided for struggling with so tempestuous a gale. And if the Centurion was lost, or should be incapable of returning, there appeared in either case no possibility of their ever getting off the island, for they were at least six hundred leagues from Macao, which was their nearest port; and they were masters of no other vessel than the small Spanish bark, of about fifteen tons, which they seized at their first arrival, and which would not even hold a fourth part of their number. And the chance of their being taken off the island by the casual arrival of any other ship was altogether desperate, as perhaps no European ship had ever anchored here before, and it were madness to expect that like incidents should send another here in a hundred ages to come; so that their desponding thoughts could only suggest to them the melancholy prospect of spending the remainder of their days on this island, and bidding adieu forever to their country, their friends, their families, and all their domestic endearments.

A MELANCHOLY PROSPECT.

Nor was this the worst they had to fear: for they had reason to expect that the Governor of Guam, when he should be informed of their situation, might send a force sufficient to overpower them and to remove them to that island; and then the most favourable treatment they could hope for would be to be detained prisoners for life; since, from the known policy and cruelty of the Spaniards in their distant settlements, it was rather to be expected that the Governor, if he once had them in his power, would make their want of commissions (all of them being on board the Centurion) a pretext for treating them as pirates, and for depriving them of their lives with infamy.

Page 82

In the midst of these gloomy reflections Mr. Anson had doubtless his share of disquietude, but he always kept up his usual composure and steadiness; and having soon projected a scheme for extricating himself and his men from their present anxious situation, he first communicated it to some of the most intelligent persons about him; and having satisfied himself that it was practicable, he then endeavoured to animate his people to a speedy and vigorous prosecution of it. With this view he represented to them how little foundation there was for their apprehensions of the Centurion's being lost; that he was not without hopes that she might return in a few days, but if she did not, the worst that could be supposed was that she was driven so far to the leeward of the island that she could not regain it, and that she would consequently be obliged to bear away for Macao, on the coast of China; that, as it was necessary to be prepared against all events, he had, in this case, considered of a method of carrying them off the island and joining their old ship the Centurion again at Macao; that this method was to haul the Spanish bark on shore, to saw her asunder, and to lengthen her twelve feet, which would enlarge her to near forty tons burthen, and would enable her to carry them all to China. He added that for his own part he would share the fatigue and labour with them, and would expect no more from any man than what he, the Commodore himself, was ready to submit to, and concluded with representing to them the importance of saving time, and that, in order to be the better prepared for all events, it was necessary to set to work immediately and to take it for granted that the Centurion would not be able to put back (which was indeed the Commodore's secret opinion); since, if she did return, they should only throw away a few days' application, but, if she did not, their situation and the season of the year required their utmost despatch.

These remonstrances, though not without effect, did not immediately operate so powerfully as Mr. Anson could have wished. It was some days before they were all of them heartily engaged in the project; but at last, being in general convinced of the impossibility of the ship's return, they set themselves zealously to the different tasks allotted them, and were as industrious and as eager as their commander could desire, punctually assembling at daybreak at the rendezvous, whence they were distributed to their different employments, which they followed with unusual vigour till night came on.

And now the work proceeded very successfully. The necessary ironwork was in great forwardness, and the timbers and planks (which, though not the most exquisite performances of the sawyer's art, were yet sufficient for the purpose) were all prepared; so that on the 6th of October, being the fourteenth day from the departure of the ship, they hauled the bark on shore, and on the two succeeding days she was sawn asunder (though with great care not to cut

Page 83

her planks), and her two parts were separated the proper distance from each other; and, the materials being all ready beforehand, they the next day, being the 9th of October, went on with great despatch in their proposed enlargement of her. And by this time they had all their future operations so fairly in view, and were so much masters of them, that they were able to determine when the whole would be finished, and had accordingly fixed the 5th of November for the day of their putting to sea.

THE CENTURION RETURNS.

But their projects and labours were now drawing to a speedier and happier conclusion, for on the 11th of October, in the afternoon, one of the Gloucester's men, being upon a hill in the middle of the island, perceived the Centurion at a distance, and running down with his utmost speed towards the landing-place, he in the way saw some of his comrades, to whom he hallooed out with great ecstasy, "That ship! The ship!" This being heard by Mr. Gordon, a lieutenant of marines, who was convinced by the fellow's transport that his report was true, Mr. Gordon ran towards the place where the Commodore and his people were at work, and being fresh and in breath easily outstripped the Gloucester's man, and got before him to the Commodore, who, on hearing this happy and unexpected news, threw down his axe with which he was then at work, and by his joy broke through for the first time the equable and unvaried character which he had hitherto preserved. The others who were with him instantly ran down to the seaside in a kind of frenzy, eager to feast themselves with a sight they had so ardently wished for and of which they had now for a considerable time despaired. By five in the evening the Centurion was visible in the offing to them all; and, a boat being sent off with eighteen men to reinforce her, and with fresh meat and fruits for the refreshment of her crew, she the next afternoon happily came to an anchor in the road, where the Commodore immediately came on board her, and was received by us with the sincerest and heartiest acclamations.

CHAPTER 29. THE CENTURION AGAIN DRIVEN TO SEA—HER RETURN—DEPARTURE FROM TINIAN.

When the Commodore came on board the Centurion on her return to Tinian as already mentioned, he resolved to stay no longer at the island than was absolutely necessary to complete our stock of water, a work which we immediately set ourselves about. But on the 14th of October, being but the third day after our arrival, a sudden gust of wind brought home our anchor, forced us off the bank and drove the ship out to sea a second time. However, as the weather was favourable, and our crew was now stronger than when we were first driven out, we in about five days' time returned again to an anchor at Tinian and relieved those we had left behind us from their second fears of being deserted by their ship.

Page 84

On our arrival we found that the Spanish bark, the old object of their hopes, had undergone a new metamorphosis, for those we had left on shore began to despair of our return, and conceiving that the lengthening the bark as formerly proposed was both a toilsome and unnecessary measure, considering the small number they consisted of, they had resolved to join her again and to restore her to her first state; and in this scheme they had made some progress for they had brought the two parts together, and would have soon completed her had not our coming back put a period to their labours and disquietude.

On our coming to an anchor again after our second driving off to sea, we laboured indefatigably in getting in our water; and having by the 20th of October completed it to fifty tuns, which we supposed would be sufficient for our passage to Macao, we on the next day sent one of each mess on shore to gather as large a quantity of oranges lemons, cocoa-nuts, and other fruits of the island as they possibly could, for the use of themselves and messmates when at sea. And these purveyors returning on board us on the evening of the same day, we then set fire to the bark and proa, hoisted in our boats, and got under sail, steering away for the south end of the island of Formosa and taking our leave for the third and last time of the island of Tinian.

CHAPTER 30. CHINESE FISHING FLEETS—ARRIVAL AT MACAO.

The eastern monsoon was now, we reckoned, fairly settled, and we had a constant gale blowing right upon our stern, so that we generally ran from forty to fifty leagues a day. But we had a large hollow sea pursuing us, which occasioned the ship to labour much, whence we received great damage in our rigging, which was grown very rotten, and our leak was augmented; but happily for us our people were now in full health, so that there were no complaints of fatigue, but all went through their attendance on the pumps, and every other duty of the ship, with ease and cheerfulness.

FORMOSA.

The 3rd of November, about four in the afternoon, we saw the island of Botel Tobago Xima, and by eleven the next morning got a sight of the southern part of the island of Formosa. In the evening we were surprised with a view of what we at first sight conceived to have been breakers, but on a stricter examination we found them to be only a great number of fires on the island of Formosa. These, we imagined, were intended by the inhabitants of that island as signals for us to touch there; but that suited not our views, we being impatient to reach the port of Macao as soon as possible. From Formosa we steered west-north-west, and sometimes still more northerly, and on the 5th of November we at last about midnight, got sight of the mainland of China, bearing north by west, four leagues distant.

Page 85

We then brought the ship to, with her head to the sea, proposing to wait for the morning; and before sunrise we were surprised to find ourselves in the midst of an incredible number of fishing-boats, which seemed to cover the surface of the sea as far as the eye could reach. I may well style their number incredible, since I cannot believe, upon the lowest estimate, that there were so few as 6,000 most of them manned with five hands, and none with less than three. Nor was this swarm of fishing vessels peculiar to this spot, for, as we ran onto the westward, we found them as abundant on every part of the coast. We at first doubted not but we should procure a pilot from them to carry us to Macao; but though many of them came close to the ship and we endeavoured to tempt them by showing them a number of dollars—a most alluring bait for Chinese of all ranks and professions—yet we could not entice them on board us; though I presume the only difficulty was their not comprehending what we wanted them to do, for we could have no communication with them but by signs. Indeed we often pronounced the word Macao, but this we had reason to suppose they understood in a different sense, for in return they sometimes held up fish to us, and we afterwards learned that the Chinese name for fish is of a somewhat similar sound. But what surprised us most was the inattention and want of curiosity which we observed in this herd of fishermen. A ship like ours had doubtless never been in those seas before; perhaps there might not be one amongst all the Chinese employed in this fishery who had ever seen any European vessel; so that we might reasonably have expected to have been considered by them as a very uncommon and extraordinary object.

CHINESE INDIFFERENCE.

But though many of their vessels came close to the ship, yet they did not appear to be at all interested about us. Nor did they deviate in the least from their course to regard us; which insensibility, especially of maritime persons about a matter in their own profession, is scarcely to be credited, did not the general behaviour of the Chinese in other instances furnish us with continual proof of a similar turn of mind.

The next day, about two o'clock, as we were standing to the westward within two leagues of the coast, and still surrounded by fishing vessels in as great numbers as at first, we perceived that a boat ahead of us waved a red flag and blew a horn. This we considered as a signal made to us either to warn us of some shoal or to inform us that they would supply us with a pilot, and in this belief we immediately sent our cutter to the boat to know their intentions; but we were soon made sensible of our mistake, and found that this boat was the Commodore of the whole fishery, and that the signal she had made was to order them all to leave off fishing and to return in shore, which we saw them instantly obey. On this disappointment we kept on our course to the westward, and the next

Page 86

day being the 7th, we were abreast of a chain of islands which stretched from east to west. These, as we afterwards found, were called the islands of Lema. These islands we left on the starboard side, passing within four miles of them, where we had twenty-four fathoms water. We were still surrounded by fishing-boats, and we once more sent the cutter on board one of them to endeavour to procure a pilot, but could not prevail. However, one of the Chinese directed us by signs to sail round the westernmost of the islands or rocks of Lema, and then to haul up. We followed this direction, and in the evening came to anchor in eighteen fathoms.

After having continued at anchor all night, we on the 9th, at four in the morning, sent our cutter to sound the channel where we proposed to pass; but before the return of the cutter a Chinese pilot put on board us, and told us in broken Portuguese he would carry us to Macao for thirty dollars. These were immediately paid him, and we then weighed and made sail, and soon after several other pilots came on board us, who, to recommend themselves, produced certificates from the captains of several ships they had piloted in; but we continued the ship under the management of the Chinese who came first on board. By this time we learned that we were not far distant from Macao, and that there were in the river of Canton, at the mouth of which Macao lies, eleven European ships, of which four were English. Our pilot carried us between the islands of Bamboo and Cabouce, but the winds hanging in the northern board, and the tides often setting strongly against us, we were obliged to come frequently to an anchor, so that we did not get through between the two islands till the 12th of November at two in the morning. At ten o'clock we happily anchored in Macao road. Thus, after a fatiguing cruise of above two years' continuance, we once more arrived in an amicable port in a civilised country, where the conveniences of life were in great plenty; where the naval stores, which we now extremely wanted, could be in some degree procured; where we expected the inexpressible satisfaction of receiving letters from our relations and friends; and where our countrymen who were lately arrived from England would be capable of answering the numerous enquiries we were prepared to make both about public and private occurrences, and to relate to us many particulars which, whether of importance or not, would be listened to by us with the utmost attention, after the long suspension of our correspondence with our country to which the nature of our undertaking had hitherto subjected us.

CHAPTER 31. MACAO—INTERVIEW WITH THE GOVERNOR—A VISIT TO CANTON.

Page 87

The city of Macao is a Portuguese settlement situated in an island at the mouth of the river of Canton. It was formerly a very rich and populous city, and capable of defending itself against the power of the adjacent Chinese governors, but at present it is much fallen from its ancient splendour; for though it is inhabited by the Portuguese and has a governor nominated by the King of Portugal, yet it subsists merely by the sufferance of the Chinese, who can starve the place and dispossess the Portuguese whenever they please. This obliges the Governor of Macao to behave with great circumspection, and carefully to avoid every circumstance that may give offence to the Chinese. The river of Canton, at the mouth of which this city lies, is the only Chinese port frequented by European ships, and this river is indeed a more commodious harbour on many accounts than Macao. But the peculiar customs of the Chinese, only adapted to the entertainment of trading ships, and the apprehensions of the Commodore lest he should embroil the East India Company with the Regency of Canton if he should insist on being treated upon a different footing than the merchant men, made him resolve to go first to Macao before he ventured into the port of Canton. Indeed, had not this reason prevailed with him, he himself had nothing to fear, for it is certain that he might have entered the port of Canton, and might have continued there as long as he pleased, and afterwards have left it again, although the whole power of the Chinese Empire had been brought together to oppose him.

The Commodore, not to depart from his usual prudence, no sooner came to an anchor in Macao road than he despatched an officer with his compliments to the Portuguese Governor of Macao, requesting His Excellency by the same officer to advise him in what manner it would be proper to act to avoid offending the Chinese, which, as there were four of our ships in their power at Canton, was a matter worthy of attention. The difficulty which the Commodore principally apprehended related to the duty usually paid by all ships in the river of Canton, according to their tonnage. For as men-of-war are exempted in every foreign harbour from all manner of port charges, the Commodore thought it would be derogatory to the honour of his country to submit to this duty in China; and therefore he desired the advice of the Governor of Macao, who, being a European, could not be ignorant of the privileges claimed by a British man-of-war, and consequently might be expected to give us the best lights for avoiding this perplexity. Our boat returned in the evening with two officers sent by the Governor, who informed the Commodore that it was the Governor's opinion that if the Centurion ventured into the river of Canton, the duty would certainly be demanded; and therefore, if the Commodore approved of it, he would send him a pilot who should conduct us into another safe harbour, called the Typa, which was every way commodious for careening the ship (an operation which we were resolved to begin upon as soon as possible), and where the above-mentioned duty would in all probability be never asked for.

Page 88

This proposal the Commodore agreed to, and in the morning we weighed anchor, and, under the direction of the Portuguese pilot, steered for the intended harbour, where we moored in about five fathoms water. This harbour of the Typa is formed by a number of islands, and is about six miles distant from Macao. Here we saluted the Castle of Macao with eleven guns, which were returned by an equal number.

The next day the Commodore paid a visit in person to the Governor, and was saluted at his landing by eleven guns, which were returned by the Centurion. Mr. Anson's business in this visit was to solicit the Governor to grant us a supply of provisions, and to furnish us with such stores as were necessary to refit the ship. The Governor seemed really inclined to do us all the service he could, and assured the Commodore, in a friendly manner, that he would privately give us all the assistance in his power; but he, at the same time, frankly owned that he dared not openly furnish us with anything we demanded, unless we first procured an order for it from the Viceroy of Canton, for that he neither received provisions for his garrison, nor any other necessaries, but by permission from the Chinese Government; and as they took care only to furnish him from day to day, he was indeed no other than their vassal, whom they could at all times compel to submit to their own terms, only by laying an embargo on his provisions.

On this declaration of the Governor, Mr. Anson resolved himself to go to Canton to procure a license from the Viceroy, and he accordingly hired a Chinese boat for himself and his attendants. On his arrival there he consulted with the super cargoes and officers of the English ships how to procure an order from the Viceroy for the necessaries he wanted. As it is the custom with these gentlemen never to apply to the supreme magistrate himself, whatever difficulties they labour under, but to transact all matters relating to the Government by the mediation of the principal Chinese merchants, Mr. Anson was advised to follow the same method upon this occasion, the English promising to exert all their interest to engage the merchants in his favour.

CHINESE PROMISES.

And when the Chinese merchants were applied to, they readily undertook the management of it, and promised to answer for its success; but after near a month's delay and reiterated excuses, during which interval they pretended to be often upon the point of completing the business, they at last threw off the mask, and declared they neither had applied to the Viceroy, nor could they, for he was too great a man, they said, for them to approach on any occasion.

CHAPTER 32.

A LETTER TO THE VICEROY—A CHINESE MANDARIN—THE CENTURION IS
REFITTED
AND PUTS TO SEA.

Page 89

Mr. Anson now saw clearly that if he had at first carried his ship into the river of Canton and had immediately applied himself to the mandarins, who are the chief officers of State, instead of employing the merchants to apply for him, he would in all probability have had all his requests granted, and would have been soon despatched. He had already lost a month by the wrong measures he had been put upon, but he resolved to lose as little more time as possible; and therefore, the 17th of December, being the next day after his return from Canton, he wrote a letter to the Viceroy of that place acquainting him that he was commander-in-chief of a squadron of his Britannic Majesty's ships of war, which had been cruising for two years past in the South Seas against the Spaniards, who were at war with the King his master; that, in his way back to England, he had put into the port of Macao, having a considerable leak in his ship, and being in great want of provisions, so that it was impossible for him to proceed on his voyage till his ship was repaired, and he was supplied with the necessaries he wanted; that he had been at Canton in hopes of being admitted to a personal audience of His Excellency, but being a stranger to the customs of the country, he had not been able to inform himself what steps were necessary to be taken to procure such an audience, and therefore was obliged to apply to him in this manner, to desire His Excellency to give orders for his being permitted to employ carpenters and proper workmen to refit his ship, and to furnish himself with provisions and stores, thereby to enable him to pursue his voyage to Great Britain with this monsoon;* hoping at the same time that these orders would be issued with as little delay as possible, lest it might occasion his loss of the season, and he might be prevented from departing till the next winter.

(Note. Anson, of course, had no intention of sailing for England. His reason for the deception is given in chapter 33.)

A MANDARIN COMES ON BOARD.

This letter was written on the 17th of December, and on the 19th in the morning a mandarin of the first rank, who was Governor of the city of Janson, together with two mandarins of an inferior class, and a great retinue of officers and servants, having with them eighteen half-galleys decorated with a great number of streamers, and furnished with music, and full of men, came to grapnel ahead of the Centurion; whence the mandarin sent a message to the Commodore, telling him that he (the mandarin) was ordered by the Viceroy of Canton to examine the condition of the ship, and desiring the ship's boat might be sent to fetch him on board. The Centurion's boat was immediately despatched, and preparations were made for receiving him; for a hundred of the most sightly of the crew were uniformly dressed in the regimentals of the marines, and were drawn up under arms on the main-deck, against his arrival. When he entered

Page 90

the ship he was saluted by the drums and what other military music there was on board; and passing by the new-formed guard, he was met by the Commodore on the quarter-deck, who conducted him to the great cabin. Here the mandarin explained his commission, declaring that his business was to examine all the particulars mentioned in the Commodore's letter to the Viceroy; that he was particularly instructed to inspect the leak, and had for that purpose brought with him two Chinese carpenters.

This mandarin appeared to be a person of very considerable parts, and endowed with more frankness and honesty than is to be found in the generality of the Chinese. After the proper inquiries had been made, particularly about the leak, which the Chinese carpenters reported to be as dangerous as it had been represented, and consequently that it was impossible for the Centurion to proceed to sea without being refitted, the mandarin expressed himself satisfied with the account given in the Commodore's letter. And this magistrate, as he was more intelligent than any other person of his nation that came to our knowledge, so likewise was he more curious and inquisitive, viewing each part of the ship with particular attention, and appearing greatly surprised at the largeness of the lower-deck guns, and at the weight and size of the shot. The Commodore observing his astonishment thought this a proper opportunity to convince the Chinese of the prudence of granting him a speedy and ample supply of all he wanted. With this view he told the mandarin and those who were with him, that besides the demands he made for a general supply, he had a particular complaint against the proceedings of the custom-house of Macao; that at his first arrival the Chinese boats had brought on board plenty of greens and variety of fresh provisions for daily use, for which they had always been paid to their full satisfaction, but that the custom-house officers at Macao had soon forbid them, by which means he was deprived of those refreshments which were of the utmost consequence to the health of his men after their long and sickly voyage; that as they, the mandarins, had informed themselves of his wants, and were eye-witnesses of the force and strength of his ship, they might be satisfied it was not for want of power to supply himself that he desired the permission of the Government to purchase what provisions he stood in need of; that they must be convinced that the Centurion alone was capable of destroying the whole navigation of the port of Canton, or of any other port in China, without running the least risk from all the force the Chinese could collect; that it was true this was not the manner of proceeding between nations in friendship with each other, but it was likewise true that it was not customary for any nation to permit the ships of their friends to starve and sink in their ports, when those friends had money to supply their wants and only desired liberty to lay it out; that they must confess he and his people had

Page 91

hitherto behaved with great modesty and reserve, but that as his wants were each day increasing, hunger would at last prove too strong for any restraint, and necessity was acknowledged in all countries to be superior to every other law, and therefore it could not be expected that his crew would long continue to starve in the midst of that plenty to which their eyes were every day witnesses. To this the Commodore added (though perhaps with a less serious air) that if by the delay of supplying him with fresh provisions his men should be reduced to the necessity of turning cannibals, and preying upon their own species, it was easy to be foreseen that, independent of their friendship to their comrades, they would in point of luxury prefer the plump, well-fed Chinese to their own emaciated shipmates. The first mandarin acquiesced in the justness of this reasoning, and told the Commodore that he should that night proceed for Canton; that on his arrival a council of mandarins would be summoned, of which he himself was a member, and that all that was demanded would be amply and speedily granted. And with regard to the Commodore's complaint of the custom-house of Macao, he undertook to rectify that immediately by his own authority; for, desiring a list to be given him of the quantity of provision necessary for the expense of the ship for a day, he wrote a permit under it, and delivered it to one of his attendants, directing him to see that quantity sent on board early every morning; and this order from that time forward was punctually complied with.

A DINNER PARTY.

When this weighty affair was thus in some degree regulated, the Commodore invited him and his two attendant mandarins to dinner, telling them at the same time that if his provision, either in kind or quantity, was not what they might expect, they must thank themselves for having confined him to so hard an allowance. One of his dishes was beef, which the Chinese all dislike, though Mr. Anson was not apprised of it; this seems to be derived from the Indian superstition,* which for some ages past has made a great progress in China. However, his guests did not entirely fast, for the three mandarins completely finished the white part of four large fowls. But they were extremely embarrassed with their knives and forks, and were quite incapable of making use of them, so that, after some fruitless attempts to help themselves, which were sufficiently awkward, one of the attendants was obliged to cut their meat in small pieces for them. But whatever difficulty they might have in complying with the European manner of eating, they seemed not to be novices in drinking. The Commodore excused himself in this part of the entertainment, under the pretence of illness; but there being another gentleman present, of a florid and jovial complexion, the chief mandarin clapped him on the shoulder, and told him by the interpreter that certainly he could not plead sickness, and therefore insisted on his bearing him company; and that gentleman

Page 92

perceiving that after they had despatched four or five bottles of Frontiniac, the mandarin still continued unruffled, he ordered a bottle of citron-water to be brought up, which the Chinese seemed much to relish; and this being near finished they arose from table, in appearance cool and uninfluenced by what they had drunk. And the Commodore, having, according to custom, made the mandarin a present, they all departed in the same vessels that brought them.

(Note. The cow has been held in high honour in India from early times. The slaughtering and eating the flesh of kine is considered an abominable crime. The connection between India and Chinese has always been close. The Buddhist religion was introduced from India during the first century of the Christian era, and with it no doubt the veneration of the cow.)

After their departure the Commodore with great impatience expected the resolution of the council, and the necessary licences for his refitment. For it must be observed that he could neither purchase stores nor necessaries with his money, nor did any kind of workman dare to engage themselves to work for him, without the permission of the Government first obtained.

Some time before this Captain Saunders took his passage to England on board a Swedish ship, and was charged with despatches from the Commodore; and soon after, in the month of December, Captain Mitchel and Colonel Cracherode embarked on board one of our company's ships; and I, having obtained the Commodore's leave to return home, embarked with them. I must observe, too (having omitted it before), that whilst we lay here at Macao we were informed by some of the officers of our Indiamen that the *Severn* and the *Pearl*, the two ships of our squadron which had separated from us off Cape Noir, were safely arrived at Rio Janeiro, on the coast of Brazil; and it was with great joy we received the news, after the strong persuasion, which had so long prevailed amongst us, of their having both perished.

Notwithstanding the favourable disposition of the mandarin Governor of Janson at his leaving Mr. Anson, several days had elapsed before he had any advice from him, and Mr. Anson was privately informed there were great debates in council upon his affair. However, it should seem that the representation of the Commodore to the mandarins of the facility with which he could right himself, if justice were denied him, had at last its effect; for on the 6th of January, in the morning, the Governor of Janson, the Commodore's advocate, sent down the Viceroy of Canton's warrant for the refitment of the *Centurion*, and for supplying her people with all they wanted; and next day a number of Chinese smiths and carpenters went on board.

Page 93

It was the beginning of April before they had new-rigged the ship, stowed their provisions and water on board, and fitted her for the sea; and before this time the Chinese grew very uneasy and extremely desirous that she should be gone, either not knowing, or pretending not to believe, that this was a point the Commodore was as eagerly set on as they could be. On the 3rd of April two mandarin boats came on board from Macao to urge his departure; and this having been often done before, though there had been no pretence to suspect Mr. Anson of any affected delays, he at this last message answered them in a determined tone, desiring them to give him no further trouble, for he would go when he thought proper and not before. On this rebuke the Chinese (though it was not in their power to compel him to be gone) immediately prohibited all provisions from being carried on board him, and took such care that their injunctions should be complied with, that from that time forwards nothing could be purchased at any rate whatever.

AT SEA AGAIN.

On the 6th of April the Centurion weighed from the Tupa, and warped to the southward, and by the 15th she was got into Macao road, completing her water as she passed along, so that there remained now very few articles more to attend to; and her whole business being finished by the 19th, she, at three in the afternoon of that day, weighed and made sail, and stood to sea.

CHAPTER 33. WAITING FOR THE Manila GALLEON.

The Commodore was now got to sea, with his ship very well refitted, his stores replenished, and an additional stock of provisions on board. His crew, too, was somewhat reinforced, for he had entered twenty-three men during his stay at Macao, the greatest part of which were Lascars or Indian sailors, and some few Dutch. He gave out at Macao that he was bound to Batavia, and thence to England; and though the western monsoon was now set in, when that passage is considered as impracticable, yet by the confidence he had expressed in the strength of his ship and the dexterity of his people he had persuaded not only his own crew, but the people at Macao likewise, that he proposed to try this unusual experiment; so that there were many letters put on board him by the inhabitants of Canton and Macao for their friends at Batavia.

But his real design was of a very different nature, for he knew that instead of one annual ship from Acapulco to Manila there would be this year, in all probability, two, since by being before Acapulco he had prevented one of them from putting to sea the preceding season. He therefore resolved to cruise for these returning vessels off Cape Espiritu Santo, on the island of Samal, which is the first land they always make in the Philippine islands. And as June is generally the month in which they arrive there, he doubted not but he should get to his intended station in time enough to intercept them. It is true they were

Page 94

said to be stout vessels, mounting forty-four guns apiece, and carrying above 500 hands, and might be expected to return in company; and he himself had but 227 hands on board, of which near thirty were boys. But this disproportion of strength did not deter him, as he knew his ship to be much better fitted for a sea engagement than theirs, and as he had reason to expect that his men would exert themselves in the most extraordinary manner when they had in view the immense wealth of these Manila galleons.

This project the Commodore had resolved on in his own thoughts ever since his leaving the coast of Mexico, and the greatest mortification which he received from the various delays he had met with in China was his apprehension lest he might be thereby so long retarded as to let the galleons escape him. Indeed, at Macao, it was incumbent on him to keep these views extremely secret, for there being a great intercourse and a mutual connection of interests between that port and Manila, he had reason to fear that, if his designs were discovered, intelligence would be immediately sent to Manila and measures would be taken to prevent the galleons from falling into his hands. But being now at sea, and entirely clear of the coast, he summoned all his people on the quarter-deck, and informed them of his resolution to cruise for the two Manila ships, of whose wealth they were not ignorant. He told them he should choose a station where he could not fail of meeting with them; and though they were stout ships and full-manned, yet, if his own people behaved with their accustomed spirit, he was certain he should prove too hard for them both, and that one of them at least could not fail of becoming his prize. He further added that many ridiculous tales had been propagated about the strength of the sides of these ships, and their being impenetrable to cannon-shot; that these fictions had been principally invented to palliate the cowardice of those who had formerly engaged them; but he hoped they were none of those present weak enough to give credit to so absurd a story. For his own part he did assure them upon his word that, whenever he met with them, he would fight them so near that they should find his bullets, instead of being stopped by one of their sides, should go through them both.

CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS.

This speech of the Commodore's was received by his people with great joy, for no sooner had he ended than they expressed their approbation, according to naval custom, by three strenuous cheers, and all declared their determination to succeed or perish whenever the opportunity presented itself. And now their hopes, which since their departure from the coast of Mexico had entirely subsided, were again revived; and they all persuaded themselves that, notwithstanding the various casualties and disappointments they had hitherto met with, they should yet be repaid the price of their fatigues, and should at last return home enriched

Page 95

with the spoils of the enemy. For, firmly relying on the assurances of the Commodore that they should certainly meet with the vessels, they were all of them too sanguine to doubt a moment of mastering them; so that they considered themselves as having them already in their possession. And this confidence was so universally spread through the whole ship's company that, the Commodore having taken some Chinese sheep to sea with him for his own provision, and one day enquiring of his butcher why for some time past he had seen no mutton at his table, asking him if all the sheep were killed, the butcher very seriously replied that there were indeed two sheep left, but that if his honour would give him leave, he proposed to keep those for the entertainment of the General of the galleons.

When the Centurion left the port of Macao she stood for some days to the westward, and on the 1st of May they saw part of the island of Formosa, and standing thence to the southward, they, on the 4th of May about seven in the evening, discovered from the masthead five small islands, which were judged to be the Bashees, and they had afterwards a sight of Botel Tobago Xima. After getting a sight of the Bashee Islands, they stood between the south and south-west for Cape Espiritu Santo, and the 20th of May at noon they first discovered that cape, which about four o'clock they brought to bear south-south-west, about eleven leagues distant. It appeared to be of a moderate height, with several round hummocks on it. As it was known that there were sentinels placed upon this cape to make signals to the Acapulco ship when she first falls in with the land, the Commodore immediately tacked, and ordered the top-gallant sails to be taken in to prevent being discovered; and this being the station in which it was resolved to cruise for the galleons, they kept the cape between the south and west, and endeavoured to confine themselves between the latitude of 12 degrees 50 minutes and 13 degrees 5 minutes.

It was the last of May, by the foreign style, when they arrived off this cape; and the month of June, by the same style, being that in which the Manila ships are usually expected, the Centurion's people were now waiting each hour with the utmost impatience for the happy crisis which was to balance the account of all their past calamities. As from this time there was but small employment for the crew, the Commodore ordered them almost every day to be exercised in the management of the great guns and in the use of their small arms. This had been his practice, more or less, at all convenient seasons during the whole course of his voyage, and the advantages which he received from it in his engagement with the galleon were an ample recompense for all his care and attention. The men were taught the shortest method of loading with cartridges, and were constantly trained to fire at a mark, which was usually hung at the yard-arm, and some little reward was given to the most expert. The whole crew, by this management, were rendered extremely skilful, quick in loading, all of them good marksmen, and some of them most extraordinary ones, so that I doubt not but, in

the use of small arms, they were more than a match for double their number who had not been habituated to the same kind of exercise.

Page 96

AN ILL-TIMED DISAGREEMENT.

It was the last of May, New Style, as has been already said, when the Centurion arrived off Cape Espiritu Santo, and consequently the next day began the month in which the galleons were to be expected. The Commodore therefore made all necessary preparations for receiving them. All this time, too, he was very solicitous to keep at such a distance from the cape as not to be discovered; but it has been since learned that notwithstanding his care, he was seen from the land, and advice of him was sent to Manila, where it was at first disbelieved; but on reiterated intelligence (for it seems he was seen more than once) the merchants were alarmed, and the Governor was applied to, who undertook (the commerce supplying the necessary sums) to fit out a force consisting of two ships of 32 guns, one of 20 guns, and two sloops of 10 guns each, to attack the Centurion on her station. And some of these vessels did actually weigh with this view, but the principal ship not being ready, and the monsoon being against them, the commerce and the Government disagreed, and the enterprise was laid aside. This frequent discovery of the Centurion from the shore was somewhat extraordinary, for the pitch of the cape is not high, and she usually kept from ten to fifteen leagues distant, though once, indeed, by an indraught of the tide, as was supposed, they found themselves in the morning within seven leagues of the land.

CHAPTER 34. THE CAPTURE OF THE GALLEON.

As the month of June advanced, the expectancy and impatience of the Commodore's people each day increased, and I think no better idea can be given of their great eagerness on this occasion than by copying a few paragraphs from the journal of an officer who was then on board, as it will, I presume, be a more natural picture of the full attachment of their thoughts to the business of their cruise than can be given by any other means. The paragraphs I have selected, as they occur in order of time are as follows:

May 31. Exercising our men at their quarters, in great expectation of meeting with the galleons very soon, this being the 11th of June, their style.

June 3. Keeping in our stations and looking out for the galleons.

June 5. Begin now to be in great expectations, this being the middle of June, their style.

June 11. Begin to grow impatient at not seeing the galleons.

June 13. The wind having blown fresh easterly for the forty-eight hours past, gives us great expectations of seeing the galleons soon.

June 15. Cruising on and off and looking out strictly.

June 19. This being the last day of June, New Style, the galleons, if they arrive at all, must appear soon.

...

From these samples it is sufficiently evident how completely the treasure of the galleons had engrossed their imagination, and how anxiously they passed the latter part of their cruise, when the certainty of the arrival of these vessels was dwindled down to probability only, and that probability became each hour more and more doubtful.

Page 97

THE GALLEON SIGHTED.

However, on the 20th of June, Old Style, being just a month from their arrival on their station, they were relieved from this state of uncertainty when, at sunrise, they discovered a sail from the masthead in the south-east quarter. On this a general joy spread through the whole ship, for they had no doubt but this was one of the galleons, and they expected soon to see the other. The Commodore instantly stood towards her, and at half an hour after seven they were near enough to see her from the Centurion's deck, at which time the galleon fired a gun and took in her top-gallant sails, which was supposed to be a signal to her consort to hasten her up; and therefore the Centurion fired a gun to leeward,* to amuse her. The Commodore was surprised to find that in all this time the galleon did not change her course, but continued to bear down upon him, for he hardly believed, what afterwards appeared to be the case, that she knew his ship to be the Centurion and resolved to fight him.

(Note. Probably as a pretended signal to a consort. The two ships were endeavouring to deceive each other.)

About noon the Commodore was little more than a league distant from the galleon, and could fetch her wake, so that she could not now escape, and no second ship appearing, it was concluded that she had been separated from her consort. Soon after the galleon hauled up her foresail and brought to under topsails, with her head to the northward, hoisting Spanish colours and having the standard of Spain flying at the topgallant masthead. Mr. Anson in the meantime had prepared all things for an engagement on board the Centurion, and had taken all possible care both for the most effectual exertion of his small strength, and for avoiding the confusion and tumult too frequent in actions of this kind. He picked out about thirty of his choicest hands and best marksmen, whom he distributed into his tops, and who fully answered his expectation by the signal services they performed. As he had not hands enough remaining to quarter a sufficient number to each great gun in the customary manner, he therefore, on his lower tier, fixed only two men to each gun, who were to be solely employed in loading it, whilst the rest of his people were divided into different gangs of ten or twelve men each, who were constantly moving about the decks to run out and fire such guns as were loaded. By this management he was enabled to make use of all his guns, and, instead of firing broad sides with intervals between them, he kept up a constant fire without intermission, whence he doubted not to procure very signal advantages; for it is common with the Spaniards to fall down upon the decks when they see a broadside preparing and to continue in that posture till it is given; after which they rise again and, presuming the danger to be for some time over, work their guns, and fire with great briskness till another broadside is ready; but the firing gun by gun in the manner directed by the Commodore rendered this practice of theirs impossible.

Page 98

A GALLANT FIGHT.

The Centurion being thus prepared, and nearing the galleon apace, there happened, a little after noon, several squalls of wind and rain, which often obscured the galleon from their sight; but whenever it cleared up they observed her resolutely lying to, and towards one o'clock the Centurion hoisted her broad pendant and colours, she being then within gun shot of the enemy; and the Commodore, observing the Spaniards to have neglected clearing their ship till that time, as he then saw them throwing over board cattle and lumber, he gave orders to fire upon them with the chase guns to embarrass them in their work, and prevent them from completing it, though his general directions had been not to engage till they were within pistol-shot. The galleon returned the fire with two of her stern-chasers, and the Centurion getting her sprit sail-yard fore and aft, that if necessary she might be ready for boarding, the Spaniards in a bravado rigged their spritsail-yard fore and aft likewise. Soon after the Centurion came abreast of the enemy within pistol-shot, keeping to the leeward with a view of preventing them from putting before the wind and gaining the port of Jalapay, from which they were about seven leagues distant. And now the engagement began in earnest, and for the first half-hour Mr. Anson overreached the galleon and lay on her bow, where by the great wideness of his ports he could traverse almost all his guns upon the enemy, whilst the galleon could only bring a part of hers to bear. Immediately on the commencement of the action the mats with which the galleon had stuffed her netting took fire and burned violently, blazing up half as high as the mizzen top. This accident (supposed to be caused by the Centurion's wads) threw the enemy into great confusion, and at the same time alarmed the Commodore, for he feared lest the galleon should be burned, and lest he himself too might suffer by her driving on board him. But the Spaniards at last freed themselves from the fire by cutting away the netting, and tumbling the whole mass which was in flames into the sea. But still the Centurion kept her first advantageous position, firing her cannon with great regularity and briskness, whilst at the same time the galleon's decks lay open to her topmen, who having at their first volley driven the Spaniards from their tops, made prodigious havoc with their small arms, killing or wounding every officer but one that ever appeared on the quarter-deck, and wounding in particular the General of the galleon himself; and though the Centurion, after the first half-hour, lost her original situation and was close alongside the galleon, and the enemy continued to fire briskly for near an hour longer, yet at last the Commodore's grape-shot swept their decks so effectually, and the number of their slain and wounded was so considerable, that they began to fall into great disorder, especially as the General, who was the life of the action, was no longer capable

Page 99

of exerting himself. Their embarrassment was visible from on board the Commodore, for the ships were so near that some of the Spanish officers were seen running about with great assiduity to prevent the desertion of their men from their quarters. But all their endeavours were in vain, for after having, as a last effort, fired five or six guns with more judgment than usual, they gave up the contest, and the galleon's colours being singed off the ensign staff in the beginning of the engagement, she struck the standard at her main top-gallant masthead, the person who was employed to do it having been in imminent peril of being killed, had not the Commodore, who perceived what he was about, given express orders to his people to desist from firing.

Thus was the Centurion possessed of this rich prize, amounting in value to near a million and a half of dollars. She was called the "Nuestra Senora de Cabadonga", and was commanded by the General Don Jeronimo de Montero, a Portuguese by birth, and the most approved officer for skill and courage of any employed in that service. The galleon was much larger than the Centurion, and had five hundred and fifty men and thirty-six guns mounted for action, besides twenty-eight pidreroes in her gunwale, quarters, and tops, each of which carried a four-pound ball. She was very well furnished with small arms, and was particularly provided against boarding, both by her close quarters and by a strong network of 2-inch rope, which was laced over her waist and was defended by half-pikes. She had sixty-seven killed in the action and eighty-four wounded, whilst the Centurion had only two killed and a lieutenant and sixteen wounded, all of whom but one recovered; of so little consequence are the most destructive arms in untutored and unpractised hands.

The treasure thus taken by the Centurion having been for at least eighteen months the great object of their hopes, it is impossible to describe the transport on board when, after all their reiterated disappointments, they at last saw their wishes accomplished. But their joy was near being suddenly damped by a most tremendous incident, for no sooner had the galleon struck than one of the lieutenants, coming to Mr. Anson to congratulate him on his prize, whispered him at the same time that the Centurion was dangerously on fire near the powder-room. The Commodore received this dreadful news without any apparent emotion, and taking care not to alarm his people, gave the necessary orders for extinguishing it, which was happily done in a short time, though its appearance at first was extremely terrible. It seems some cartridges had been blown up by accident between decks, whereby a quantity of oakum in the after hatchway near the after powder-room was set on fire, and the great smother and smoke of the oakum occasioned the apprehension of a more extended and mischievous fire. At the same instant, too, the galleon fell on board the Centurion on the starboard quarter, but she was cleared without doing or receiving any considerable damage.

Page 100

The Commodore made his first lieutenant, Mr. Suamarez, captain of this prize, appointing her a post-ship in His Majesty's service. Captain Suamarez, before night, sent on board the Centurion all the Spanish prisoners but such as were thought the most proper to be retained to assist in navigating the galleon.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

And now the Commodore learned from some of these prisoners that the other ship, which he had kept in the port of Acapulco the preceding year, instead of returning in company with the present prize, as was expected, had set sail from Acapulco alone much sooner than usual, and had in all probability got into the port of Manila long before the Centurion arrived off Cape Espiritu Santo, so that Mr. Anson, notwithstanding his present success, had great reason to regret his loss of time at Macao, which prevented him from taking two rich prizes instead of one.

CHAPTER 35. SECURING THE PRISONERS—MACAO AGAIN—AMOUNT OF THE TREASURE.

The Commodore, when the action was ended, resolved to make the best of his way with his prize for the river of Canton, being in the meantime fully employed in securing his prisoners, and in removing the treasure from on board the galleon into the Centurion. The last of these operations was too important to be postponed, for as the navigation to Canton was through seas but little known, and where, from the season of the year, much bad weather might be expected, it was of great consequence that the treasure should be sent on board the Centurion, which ship, by the presence of the Commander-in-chief, the greater number of her hands, and her other advantages, was doubtless much safer against all the casualties of winds and seas than the galleon; and the securing the prisoners was a matter of still more consequence, as not only the possession of the treasure, but the lives of the captors depended thereon. This was indeed an article which gave the Commodore much trouble and disquietude, for they were above double the number of his own people, and some of them, when they were brought on board the Centurion and had observed how slenderly she was manned, and the large proportion which the striplings bore to the rest, could not help expressing themselves with great indignation to be thus beaten by a handful of boys.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PRISONERS.

The method which was taken to hinder them from rising was by placing all but the officers and the wounded in the hold, where to give them as much air as possible, two hatchways were left open; but then (to avoid all danger whilst the Centurion's people should be employed upon the deck) there was a square partition of thick planks, made in the shape of a funnel, which enclosed each hatchway on the lower deck and reached to that directly over it on the upper deck. These funnels served to communicate the air to the hold better than could have been done without them, and

Page 101

at the same time added greatly to the security of the ship, for they being seven or eight feet high, it would have been extremely difficult for the Spaniards to have clambered up, and, still to augment that difficulty, four swivel-guns loaded with musket bullets were planted at the mouth of each funnel, and a sentinel with lighted match constantly attended, prepared to fire into the hold amongst them in case of any disturbance. Their officers, who amounted to seventeen or eighteen, were all lodged in the first lieutenant's cabin, under a constant guard of six men, and the General, as he was wounded, lay in the Commodore's cabin with a sentinel always with him, and they were all informed that any violence or disturbance would be punished with instant death; and that the Centurion's people might be at all times prepared, if notwithstanding these regulations any tumult should arise, the small arms were constantly kept loaded in a proper place, whilst all the men went armed with cutlasses and pistols, and no officer ever pulled off his clothes, and when he slept had always his arms lying ready by him.

These measures were obviously necessary, considering the hazards to which the Commodore and his people would have been exposed had they been less careful. Indeed, the sufferings of the poor prisoners though impossible to be alleviated, were much to be commiserated, for the weather was extremely hot, the stench of the hold loathsome beyond all conception, and their allowance of water but just sufficient to keep them alive, it not being practicable to spare them more than at the rate of a pint a day for each, the crew themselves having only an allowance of a pint and a half. All this considered, it was wonderful that not a man of them died during their long confinement, except three of the wounded, who died the same night they were taken; though it must be confessed that the greatest part of them were strangely metamorphosed by the heat of the hold, for when they were first taken they were sightly, robust fellows, but when, after above a month's imprisonment, they were discharged in the river of Canton, they were reduced to mere skeletons, and their air and looks corresponded much more to the conception formed of ghosts and spectres than to the figure and appearance of real men.

Thus employed in securing the treasure and the prisoners, the Commodore, as has been said, stood for the river of Canton, and on the 30th of June, at six in the evening, got sight of Cape Delangano, which then bore west ten leagues distant, and the next day he made the Bashee Islands, and the wind being so far to the northward that it was difficult to weather them, it was resolved to stand through between Grafton and Monmouth Islands, where the passage seemed to be clear; but in getting through the sea had a very dangerous aspect, for it rippled and foamed as if it had been full of breakers, which was still more terrible as it was then night. But the ships got through very safe, the prize always keeping ahead, and it was found that the appearance which had alarmed them had been occasioned only by a strong tide, and on the 11th of July, having taken on board two Chinese pilots, one for the Centurion and the other for the prize, they came to an anchor off the city of Macao.

Page 102

By this time the particulars of the cargo of the galleon were well ascertained, and it was found that she had on board 1,313,843 pieces of eight and 35,682 ounces of virgin silver, besides some cochineal and a few other commodities, which, however, were but of small account in comparison of the specie. And this being the Commodore's last prize, it hence appears that all the treasure taken by the Centurion was not much short of 400,000 pounds independent of the ships and merchandise which she either burnt or destroyed, and which by the most reasonable estimation could not amount to so little as 600,000 more; so that the whole loss of the enemy by our squadron did doubtless exceed a million sterling. To which, if there be added the great expense of the court of Spain in fitting out Pizarro, and in paying the additional charges in America incurred on our account, together with the loss of their men-of-war, the total of all these articles will be a most exorbitant sum, and is the strongest conviction of the utility of this expedition, which, with all its numerous disadvantages, did yet prove so extremely prejudicial to the enemy.

CHAPTER 36. THE CANTON RIVER—NEGOTIATING WITH THE CHINESE—PRISONERS RELEASED.

The Commodore, having taken pilots on board, proceeded with his prize for the river of Canton, and on the 14th of July came to an anchor short of the Bocca Tigris, which is a narrow passage forming the mouth of that river. This entrance he proposed to stand through the next day, and to run up as far as Tiger Island, which is a very safe road, secured from all winds.

CHINESE INQUIRIES.

But whilst the Centurion and her prize were thus at anchor, a boat with an officer came off from the mandarin commanding the forts at Bocca Tigris to examine what the ships were and whence they came. Mr. Anson informed the officer that his ship was a ship of war, belonging to the King of Great Britain, and that the other in company with him was a prize he had taken; that he was going into Canton River to shelter himself against the hurricanes which were then coming on; and that as soon as the monsoon shifted he should proceed for England. The officer then desired an account of what men, guns, and ammunition were on board, a list of all which, he said, was to be sent to the Government of Canton. But when these articles were repeated to him, particularly when he was told that there were in the Centurion four hundred fire locks and between three hundred and four hundred barrels of powder, he shrugged up his shoulders and seemed to be terrified with the bare recital, saying that no ships ever came into Canton River armed in that manner; adding that he durst not set down the whole of this force, lest it should too much alarm the Regency. After he had finished his enquiries, and was preparing to depart, he desired to leave the two custom-house officers behind him, on which the Commodore told him

Page 103

that though as a man-of-war he was prohibited from trading, and had nothing to do with customs or duties of any kind, yet for the satisfaction of the Chinese he would permit two of their people to be left on board, who might themselves be witnesses how punctually he should comply with his instructions. The officer seemed amazed when Mr. Anson mentioned being exempted from all duties, and told him that the Emperor's duty must be paid by all ships that came into his ports.

On the 16th of July the Commodore sent his second lieutenant to Canton with a letter to the Viceroy, informing him of the reason of the Centurion's putting into that port, and that the Commodore himself soon proposed to repair to Canton to pay a visit to the Viceroy. The lieutenant was very civilly received, and was promised that an answer should be sent to the Commodore the next day. In the meantime Mr. Anson gave leave to several of the officers of the galleon to go to Canton, they engaging their parole to return in two days. When these prisoners got to Canton the Regency sent for them and examined them, enquiring particularly by what means they had fallen into Mr. Anson's power. And on this occasion the prisoners were honest enough to declare that as the Kings of Great Britain and Spain were at war, they had proposed to themselves the taking of the Centurion, and had bore down upon her with that view, but that the event had been contrary to their hopes. However, they acknowledged that they had been treated by the Commodore much better than they believed they should have treated him had he fallen into their hands. This confession from an enemy had great weight with the Chinese, who till then, though they had revered the Commodore's power, had yet suspected his morals, and had considered him rather as a lawless free booter than as one commissioned by the State for revenge of public injuries. But they now changed their opinion, and regarded him as a more important person, to which perhaps the vast treasure of his prize might not a little contribute, the acquisition of wealth being a matter greatly adapted to the estimation and reverence of the Chinese nation.

In this examination of the Spanish prisoners, though the Chinese had no reason in the main to doubt the account which was given them, yet there were two circumstances which appeared to them so singular as to deserve a more ample explanation. One of them was the great disproportion of men between the Centurion and the galleon, the other was the humanity with which the people of the galleon were treated after they were taken. The mandarins therefore asked the Spaniards how they came to be overpowered by so inferior a force, and how it happened, since the two nations were at war, that they were not put to death when they came into the hands of the English. To the first of these enquiries the Spanish replied that though they had more hands than the Centurion, yet she, being intended solely for war, had a great superiority in the size

Page 104

of her guns, and in many other articles, over the galleon, which was a vessel fitted out principally for traffic. And as to the second question, they told the Chinese that amongst the nations of Europe it was not customary to put to death those who submitted, though they readily owned that the Commodore, from the natural bias of his temper, had treated both them and their countrymen, who had formerly been in his power, with very unusual courtesy, much beyond what they could have expected, or than was required by the customs established between nations at war with each other. These replies fully satisfied the Chinese, and at the same time wrought very powerfully in the Commodore's favour.

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICEROY.

On the 20th of July, in the morning, three mandarins, with a great number of boats and a vast retinue, came on board the Centurion and delivered to the Commodore the Viceroy of Canton's order for a daily supply of provisions, and for pilots to carry the ships up the river as far as the second bar; and at the same time they delivered him a message from the Viceroy in answer to the letter sent to Canton. The substance of the message was that the Viceroy desired to be excused from receiving the Commodore's visit during the then excessive hot weather, because the assembling the mandarins and soldiers necessary to that ceremony would prove extremely inconvenient and fatiguing; but that in September, when the weather would be more temperate, he should be glad to see both the Commodore himself and the English captain of the other ship that was with him. As Mr. Anson knew that an express had been dispatched to the court at Peking with an account of the Centurion and her prize being arrived in the river of Canton, he had no doubt but the principal motive for putting off this visit was that the regency at Canton might gain time to receive the Emperor's instructions about their behaviour on this unusual affair.

When the mandarins had delivered their message they began to talk to the Commodore about the duties to be paid by his ships, but he immediately told them that he would never submit to any demand of that kind, adding that no duties were ever demanded of men-of-war by nations accustomed to their reception, and that his master's orders expressly forbade him from paying any acknowledgment for his ships anchoring in any port whatever. The mandarins being thus cut short on the subject of the duty, they said they had another matter to mention, which was the only remaining one they had in charge. This was a request to the Commodore that he would release the prisoners he had taken on board the galleon, for that the Viceroy of Canton apprehended the Emperor, his master, might be displeased if he should be informed that persons who were his allies, and carried on a great commerce with his subjects, were under confinement in his dominions. Mr. Anson was himself extremely desirous to get rid of the Spaniards, having on his first arrival sent

Page 105

about one hundred of them to Macao, and those who remained, which were near four hundred more, were on many accounts a great encumbrance to him. However, to enhance the favour, he at first raised some difficulties; but, permitting himself to be prevailed on, he at last told the mandarins that to show his readiness to oblige the Viceroy he would release the prisoners whenever they (the Chinese) would send boats to fetch them off. This matter being adjusted, the mandarins departed; and on the 28th of July two Chinese junks were sent from Canton to take on board the prisoners, and to carry them to Macao. And the Commodore, agreeable to his promise, dismissed them all, and ordered his purser to send with them eight days' provision for their subsistence during their sailing down the river. This being despatched, the Centurion and her prize came to her moorings above the second bar, where they proposed to continue till the monsoon shifted.

CHAPTER 37. CHINESE TRICKERY.

Though the ships, in consequence of the Viceroy's permit, found no difficulty in purchasing provisions for their daily consumption, yet it was impossible for the Commodore to proceed to England without laying in a large quantity both of provisions and stores for his use during the voyage. The procuring this supply was attended with much embarrassment, for there were people at Canton who had undertaken to furnish him with biscuit and whatever else he wanted, and his linguist, towards the middle of September, had assured him from day to day that all was ready and would be sent on board him immediately. But a fortnight being elapsed, and nothing being brought, the Commodore sent to Canton to enquire more particularly into the reasons of this disappointment, and he had soon the vexation to be informed that the whole was an illusion; that no order had been procured from the Viceroy to furnish him with his sea stores, as had been pretended; that there was no biscuit baked, nor any one of the articles in readiness which had been promised him; nor did it appear that the contractors had taken the least step to comply with their agreement. This was most disagreeable news, and made it suspected that the furnishing the Centurion for her return to Great Britain might prove a more troublesome matter than had been hitherto imagined; especially, too, as the month of September was nearly elapsed without Mr. Anson's having received any message from the Viceroy of Canton.

It were endless to recount all the artifices, extortions, and frauds, which were practised on the Commodore and his people by the Chinese. The method of buying all things in China being by weight, the tricks made use of by them to increase the weight of the provision they sold to the Centurion were almost incredible. One time, a large quantity of fowls and ducks being brought for the ship's use, the greatest part of them presently died. This alarmed the people

Page 106

on board with the apprehension that they had been killed by poison, but on examination it appeared that it was only owing to their being crammed with stones and gravel to increase their weight, the quantity thus forced into most of the ducks being found to amount to ten ounces in each. The hogs, too, which were bought ready killed of the Chinese butchers, had water injected into them for the same purpose, so that a carcase hung up all night for the water to drain from it has lost above a stone of its weight, and when, to avoid this cheat, the hogs were bought alive, it was found that the Chinese gave them salt to increase their thirst, and having by this means excited them to drink great quantities of water, they then took measures to prevent them from discharging it again, and sold the tortured animal in this inflated state. When the Commodore first put to sea from Macao, they practised an artifice of another kind, for as the Chinese never object to the eating of any food that dies of itself, they took care, by some secret practises, that great part of his live sea-store should die in a short time after it was put on board, hoping to make a second profit of the dead carcases which they expected would be thrown overboard, and two-thirds of the hogs dying before the Centurion was out of sight of land, many of the Chinese boats followed her only to pick up the carrion. These instances may serve as a specimen of the manners of this celebrated nation, which is often recommended to the rest of the world as a pattern of all kinds of laudable qualities.

CHAPTER 38. PREPARATIONS FOR A VISIT TO CANTON.

The Commodore, towards the end of September, having found out (as has been said) that those who had contracted to supply him with sea provisions and stores had deceived him, and that the Viceroy had not sent to him according to his promise, he saw it would be impossible for him to surmount the embarrassment he was under without going himself to Canton, and visiting the Viceroy. And therefore, on the 27th of September, he sent a message to the mandarin who attended the Centurion to inform him that he, the Commodore, intended on the 1st of October to proceed in his boat to Canton, adding that the day after he got there he should notify his arrival to the Viceroy, and should desire him to fix a time for his audience; to which the mandarin returned no other answer than that he would acquaint the Viceroy with the Commodore's intentions. In the meantime all things were prepared for this expedition, and the boat's crew in particular which Mr. Anson proposed to take with him, were clothed in a uniform dress resembling that of the watermen on the Thames. They were in number eighteen and a coxswain. They had scarlet jackets and blue silk waistcoats, the whole trimmed with silver buttons, and with silver badges on their jackets and caps.

A WISE PRECAUTION.

Page 107

As it was apprehended, and even asserted, that the payment of the customary duties for the Centurion and her prize would be demanded by the Regency of Canton, and would be insisted on previous to the granting a permission for victualling the ship for her future voyage, the Commodore, who was resolved never to establish so dishonourable a precedent, took all possible precautions to prevent the Chinese from facilitating the success of their unreasonable pretensions by having him in their power at Canton. And, therefore, for the security of his ship and the great treasure on board her, he appointed his first lieutenant, Mr. Brett, to be captain of the Centurion under him, giving him proper instructions for his conduct, directing him particularly, if he, the Commodore, should be detained at Canton on account of the duties in dispute, to take out the men from the Centurion's prize and to destroy her, and then to proceed down the river through the Bocca Tigris with the Centurion alone, and to remain without that entrance till he received further orders from Mr. Anson.

These necessary steps being taken, which were not unknown to the Chinese, it should seem as if their deliberations were in some sort embarrassed thereby. It is reasonable to imagine that they were in general very desirous of getting the duties to be paid them, not perhaps solely in consideration of the amount of those dues, but to keep up their reputation for address and subtlety, and to avoid the imputation of receding from claims on which they had already so frequently insisted. However, as they now foresaw that they had no other method of succeeding than by violence, and that even against this the Commodore was prepared, they were at last disposed, I conceive, to let the affair drop, rather than entangle themselves in a hostile measure which they found would only expose them to the risk of having the whole navigation of their port destroyed, without any certain prospect of gaining their favourite point thereby.

CHAPTER 39.

STORES AND PROVISIONS—A FIRE IN CANTON—SAILORS AS FIREMEN—THE VICEROY'S GRATITUDE.

BARGAINING.

When the Commodore arrived at Canton he was visited by the principal Chinese merchants, who affected to appear very much pleased that he had met with no obstruction in getting thither. They added that, as soon as the Viceroy should be informed that Mr. Anson was at Canton, they were persuaded a day would be immediately appointed for the visit, which was the principal business that had brought the Commodore thither.

The next day the merchants returned to Mr. Anson, and told him that the Viceroy was then so fully employed in preparing his despatches for Pekin, that there was no getting admittance to him for some days; but that they had engaged one of the officers of his

court to give them information as soon as he should be at leisure when they proposed to notify Mr. Anson's arrival, and to endeavour to fix the day of audience.

Page 108

The Commodore was by this time too well acquainted with their artifices not to perceive that this was a falsehood, and had he consulted only his own judgment he would have applied directly to the Viceroy by other hands. But the Chinese merchants had so far prepossessed the supercargoes of our ships with chimerical fears, that they were extremely apprehensive of being embroiled with the government and of suffering in their interest, if those measures were taken which appeared to Mr. Anson at that time to be the most prudent; and therefore, lest the malice and double-dealing of the Chinese might have given rise to some sinister incident which would be afterwards laid at his door, he resolved to continue passive as long as it should appear that he lost no time by thus suspending his own opinion. With this view he promised not to take any immediate step himself for getting admittance to the Viceroy, provided the Chinese with whom he contracted for provisions would let him see that his bread was baked, his meat salted, and his stores prepared with the utmost despatch. But if, by the time when all was in readiness to be shipped off (which it was supposed would be in about forty days), the merchants should not have procured the Viceroy's permission, then the Commodore proposed to apply for it himself. These were the terms Mr. Anson thought proper to offer to quiet the uneasiness of the supercargoes; and notwithstanding the apparent equity of the conditions, many difficulties and objections were urged, nor would the Chinese agree to them till the Commodore had consented to pay for every article he bespoke before it was put in hand. However, at last the contract being passed, it was some satisfaction to the Commodore to be certain that his preparations were now going on, and being himself on the spot, he took care to hasten them as much as possible.

During this interval, in which the stores and provisions were getting ready, the merchants continually entertained Mr. Anson with accounts of their various endeavours to get a licence from the Viceroy, and their frequent disappointments, which to him was now a matter of amusement, as he was fully satisfied there was not one word of truth in anything they said. But when all was completed, and wanted only to be shipped, which was about the 24th of November, at which time, too, the north-east monsoon was set in, he then resolved to apply himself to the Viceroy to demand an audience, as he was persuaded that without this ceremony the procuring a permission to send his stores on board would meet with great difficulty. On the 24th of November, therefore, Mr. Anson sent one of his officers to the mandarin who commanded the guard of the principal gate of the city of Canton with a letter directed to the Viceroy. When this letter was delivered to the mandarin, he received the officer who brought it very civilly, and took down the contents of it in Chinese, and promised that the Viceroy should be immediately acquainted with it, but told the officer it was not necessary for him to wait for an answer, because a message would be sent to the Commodore himself.

Page 109

A FIRE AT CANTON.

Two days after the sending the above-mentioned letter a fire broke out in the suburbs of Canton. On the first alarm Mr. Anson went thither with his officers and his boat's crew to assist the Chinese. When he came there he found that it had begun in a sailor's shed, and that by the slightness of the buildings and the awkwardness of the Chinese it was getting head apace. But he perceived that by pulling down some of the adjacent sheds it might easily be extinguished; and particularly observing that it was running along a wooden cornice which would soon communicate it to a great distance, he ordered his people to begin with tearing away that cornice. This was presently attempted, and would have been soon executed, but in the meantime he was told that, as there was no mandarin there to direct what was to be done, the Chinese would make him (the Commodore) answerable for whatever should be pulled down by his orders. On this his people desisted, and he sent them to the English factory to assist in securing the Company's treasure and effects, as it was easy to foresee that no distance was a protection against the rage of such a fire, where so little was done to put a stop to it; for all this time the Chinese contented themselves with viewing it and now and then holding one of their idols near it, which they seemed to expect should check its progress. However, at last a mandarin came out of the city, attended by four or five hundred firemen. These made some feeble efforts to pull down the neighbouring houses, but by this time the fire had greatly extended itself, and was got amongst the merchants' warehouses, and the Chinese firemen, wanting both skill and spirit, were incapable of checking its violence, so that its fury increased upon them, and it was feared the whole city would be destroyed. In this general confusion the Viceroy himself came thither, and the Commodore was sent to and was entreated to afford his assistance, being told that he might take any measures he should think most prudent in the present emergency. And now he went thither a second time, carrying with him about forty of his people, who upon this occasion exerted themselves in such a manner as in that country was altogether without example. For they were rather animated than deterred by the flames and falling buildings amongst which they wrought, so that it was not uncommon to see the most forward of them tumble to the ground on the roofs and amidst the ruins of houses which their own efforts brought down with them. By their boldness and activity the fire was soon extinguished, to the amazement of the Chinese, and the building being all on one floor, and the materials slight, the seamen, notwithstanding their daring behaviour, happily escaped with no other injuries than some considerable bruises. The fire, though at last thus luckily extinguished, did great mischief during the time it continued, for it consumed an hundred shops and eleven streets full of warehouses, so that the damage amounted to an immense sum. It raged, indeed, with unusual violence, for in many of the warehouses there were large quantities of camphor, which greatly added to its fury, and produced a column of exceeding white flame, which shot up into the air to such a prodigious height that the flame itself was plainly seen on board the Centurion, though she was thirty miles distant.



Page 110

Whilst the Commodore and his people were labouring at the fire, and the terror of its becoming general still possessed the whole city, several of the most considerable Chinese merchants came to Mr. Anson to desire that he would let each of them have one of his soldiers (for such they styled his boat's crew from the uniformity of their dress) to guard their warehouses and dwelling-houses, which, from the known dishonesty of the populace, they feared would be pillaged in the tumult. Mr. Anson granted them this request, and all the men that he thus furnished to the Chinese behaved greatly to the satisfaction of their employers, who afterwards highly applauded their great diligence and fidelity. By this means the resolution of the English at the fire, and their trustiness and punctuality elsewhere, was the subject of general conversation amongst the Chinese, and the next morning many of the principal inhabitants waited on the Commodore to thank him for his assistance, frankly owning to him that they could never have extinguished the fire of themselves, and that he had saved their city from being totally consumed. And soon after a message came to the Commodore from the Viceroy, appointing the 30th of November for his audience, which sudden resolution of the Viceroy, in a matter that had been so long agitated in vain, was also owing to the signal services performed by Mr. Anson and his people at the fire, of which the Viceroy himself had been in some measure an eye-witness. The fixing this business of the audience was, on all accounts, a circumstance which Mr. Anson was much pleased with, as he was satisfied that the Chinese Government would not have determined this point without having agreed among themselves to give up their pretensions to the duties they claimed, and to grant him all he could reasonably ask; for, as they well knew the Commodore's sentiments, it would have been a piece of imprudence not consistent with the refined cunning of the Chinese to have admitted him to an audience only to have contested with him.

CHAPTER 40. ANSON RECEIVED BY THE VICEROY—CENTURION SETS SAIL— TABLE BAY—SPITHEAD.

THE VICEROY.

At ten o'clock in the morning, on the day appointed, a mandarin came to the Commodore to let him know that the Viceroy was ready to receive him, on which the Commodore and his retinue immediately set out. And as soon as he entered the outer gate of the city, he found a guard of two hundred soldiers drawn up ready to attend him; these conducted him to the great parade before the Emperor's palace, where the Viceroy then resided. In this parade a body of troops, to the number of ten thousand, were drawn up under arms, and made a very fine appearance, being all of them new clothed for this ceremony, and Mr. Anson and his retinue having passed through the middle of them, he was then conducted to the great hall of audience, where he found the Viceroy seated under a

Page 111

rich canopy in the Emperor's chair of state, with all his Council of Mandarins attending. Here there was a vacant seat prepared for the Commodore, in which he was placed on his arrival. He was ranked the third in order from the Viceroy, there being above him only the head of the law and of the treasury, who in the Chinese Government take place of all military officers. When the Commodore was seated he addressed himself to the Viceroy by his interpreter, and began with reciting the various methods he had formerly taken to get an audience, adding that he imputed the delays he had met with to the insincerity of those he had employed, and that he had therefore no other means left than to send, as he had done, his own officer with a letter to the gate. On the mention of this the Viceroy stopped the interpreter, and bid him assure Mr. Anson that the first knowledge they had of his being at Canton was from the letter. Mr. Anson then proceeded, acquainting the Viceroy that the proper season was now set in for returning to Europe, and that he waited only for a license to ship off his provisions and stores, which were all ready, and that, as soon as this should be granted to him, and he should have got his necessaries on board, he intended to leave the river of Canton and to make the best of his way to England. The Viceroy replied to this that the license should be immediately issued, and that everything should be ordered on board the following day. The Viceroy continued the conversation for some time, acknowledging in very civil terms how much the Chinese were obliged to him for his signal services at the fire, and owning that he had saved the city from being destroyed; and then, observing that the Centurion had been a good while on their coast, he closed his discourse by wishing the Commodore a good voyage to Europe. After which, the Commodore thanking him for his civility and assistance, took his leave.

Thus the Commodore, to his great joy, at last finished this troublesome affair, which for the preceding four months had given him great disquietude. Indeed, he was highly pleased with procuring a licence for the shipping his stores and provisions; for thereby he was enabled to return to Great Britain with the first of the monsoon, and to prevent all intelligence of his being expected. But this, though a very important point, was not the circumstance which gave him the greatest satisfaction, for he was more particularly attentive to the authentic precedent established on this occasion, by which His Majesty's ships of war are for the future exempted from all demands of duty in any of the ports of China.

HOMeward BOUND.

Page 112

In pursuance of the promises of the Viceroy, the provisions were begun to be sent on board the day after the audience, and four days after the Commodore embarked at Canton for the Centurion, and on the 7th of December the Centurion and her prize unmoored and stood down the river, passing through the Bocca Tigris on the 10th. And on this occasion I must observe that the Chinese had taken care to man the two forts on each side of that passage with as many men as they could well contain, the greatest part of them armed with pikes and matchlock muskets. These garrisons affected to show themselves as much as possible to the ships, and were doubtless intended to induce Mr. Anson to think more reverently than he had hitherto done of the Chinese military power. For this purpose they were equipped with much parade, having a great number of colours exposed to view, and on the castle in particular there were laid considerable heaps of large stones, and a soldier of unusual size, dressed in very sightly armour, stalked about on the parapet with a battleaxe in his hand endeavouring to put on as important and martial an air as possible, though some of the observers on board the Centurion shrewdly suspected, from the appearance of his armour, that instead of steel, it was composed only of a particular kind of glittering paper.

The Commodore, on the 12th of December, anchored before the town of Macao. Whilst the ships lay here the merchants of Macao finished their agreement for the galleon, for which they had offered 6,000 dollars; this was much short of her value, but the impatience of the Commodore to get to sea, to which the merchants were no strangers, prompted them to insist on so unequal a bargain. Mr. Anson had learnt enough from the English at Canton to conjecture that the war betwixt Great Britain and Spain was still continued, and that probably the French might engage in the assistance of Spain before he could arrive in Great Britain; and therefore, knowing that no intelligence could get to Europe of the prize he had taken, and the treasure he had on board, till the return of the merchantmen from Canton, he was resolved to make all possible expedition in getting back, that he might be himself the first messenger of his own good fortune, and might thereby prevent the enemy from forming any projects to intercept him. For these reasons he, to avoid all delay, accepted the sum offered for the galleon, and she being delivered to the merchants, the 15th of December 1743, the Centurion the same day got under sail on her return to England. And on the 3rd of January she came to an anchor at Prince's Island, in the Straits of Sunda, and continued there wooding and watering till the 8th, when she weighed and stood for the Cape of Good Hope, where on the 11th of March she anchored in Table Bay.

Page 113

Here the Commodore continued till the beginning of April, highly delighted with the place, which by its extraordinary accommodations, the healthiness of its air, and the picturesque appearance of the country, all enlivened by the addition of a civilised colony, was not disgraced in an imaginary comparison with the valleys of Juan Fernandez and the lawns of Tinian. During his stay he entered about forty new men, and having by the 3rd of April, 1744, completed his water and provision, he on that day weighed and put to sea. The 19th of the same month they saw the island of St. Helena, which, however, they did not touch at, but stood on their way; and on the 10th of June, being then in soundings, they spoke with an English ship from Amsterdam bound for Philadelphia, whence they received the first intelligence of a French war. The 12th they got sight of the Lizard, and the 15th, in the evening, to their infinite joy, they came safe to an anchor at Spithead. But that the signal perils which had so often threatened them in the preceding part of the enterprise might pursue them to the very last, Mr. Anson learned on his arrival that there was a French fleet of considerable force cruising in the chops of the Channel, which, by the account of their position, he found the Centurion had run through and had been all the time concealed by a fog. Thus was this expedition finished, when it had lasted three years and nine months, after having, by its event, strongly evinced this important truth: That though prudence, intrepidity, and perseverance united are not exempted from the blows of adverse fortune, yet in a long series of transactions they usually rise superior to its power, and in the end rarely fail of proving successful.

GLOSSARY.

Anchors:

Bower anchors (the best bower and the small bower). The anchors carried at the bows of a vessel.

The sheet anchor (= shoot anchor). An anchor to be shot out or lowered in case of a great danger, carried abaft the fore rigging; formerly the largest anchor.

Bag-wig. See Wig.

Barge. See Boats.

Bilging. To bilge = to be stove in, or suffer serious injury in the bilge, which is the bottom part of a ship's hull.

Boats:

Barge. The second boat of a man-of-war; a long narrow boat, generally with not less than ten oars, for the use of the chief officers.

Cutter. A boat belonging to a ship of war, shorter and in proportion broader than the barge or pinnace, fitted for rowing and sailing, and used for carrying light stores, passengers, *etc.*

Longboat. The principal boat of the old man-of-war. Now replaced by steam launches.

Pinnace. A boat for the accommodation of the inferior officers of a man-of-war, resembling the barge.

Yawl. A small boat used for much the same purposes as the cutter.

Bow-chasers. See Chasers.



Page 114

Bower. See Anchor.

Bring to. To bring a vessel's head up to the wind so that the wind blows from bow to stern.

Broad pennant. See Commodore.

Cacao. Chocolate nuts.

Cackle. To cover a cable spirally with old three-inch rope to protect it from chafing.

Callous (of a broken bone). The new bony tissue formed between and around the fractured ends of a broken bone in the process of reuniting.

Careening is the operation of heaving down a ship on one side, in order to expose the other side for cleaning.

Cartel. A written agreement between belligerents for an exchange of prisoners.

Caulk. To make a ship's seams watertight by plugging the crevices with oakum (i.e. old untwisted rope).

Chasers. Bow-chasers were two long chase-guns placed forward in the bow ports to fire directly ahead. Stern-chasers were similar guns mounted astern.

Clean. A clean ship is one whose bottom is free from barnacles and weed that check the pace.

Clearing for action. To get ready for battle by clearing the decks from encumbrances and anything unnecessary or dangerous, such as wooden partitions between cabins, *etc.*

Cochineal. A dye stuff consisting of female cochineal insects killed and dried by heat. They yield a brilliant scarlet dye.

Cohorn mortars. See Mortar.

The commerce. Used several times in the sense of "the traders."

Commodore. A naval officer ranking above a captain and below a rear-admiral. In the British Navy the rank is a temporary one, given to senior officers in command of detached squadrons. The broad pennant (chapter 4) is the flag that marks the presence of a commodore on board.

Courses. The sails below the topsails and next to the deck.

Cutter. See Boats.

Dollar. A corruption of the German “thaler,” a name for a silver coin worth about four shillings. The name was extended in the form “dollar” to other coins of similar size, notably the old Spanish “piece of eight.” See Pieces of eight.

Doubloon. A former Spanish gold coin worth about eight dollars.

Eight. See Pieces of.

Embargo. A temporary order from Government to prevent the arrival or departure of ships.

Fetch (the wake of). To reach the track left by a ship.

File (of musketeers). Latin filum, French file = a row. The word is used to signify any line of men standing directly behind one another. In ordinary two-deep formations a file consists of two men, one in the front rank and one in the rear rank.

Fishing (a mast). To strengthen or mend a mast by fastening strips of wood or iron along a weak or broken place.

Foot-rope. A rope stretched under a yard arm for sailors to stand on while reefing or furling sails.

Fore-cap. The cap is a stout block joining the bottom of one mast to the top of another; as where the foretopmast joins the foremast.



Page 115

Foremast, foretopmast, *etc.* See Mast.

Fore-reach. To gain upon or pass; to beat in sailing.

Foreyard. The lowest yard on the foremast of a square-rigged vessel.

Grapnel. A boat's anchor having more than two flukes. Come to grapnel, *cf.* Come to anchor.

Half-galleys. A galley is a low, flat-built sea-going vessel with one deck, propelled by sails and oars. A half-galley is a similar vessel, but much shorter.

Half-pike. See Pike.

Hand (the sails). To furl.

Hawser. A large rope or small cable.

Indulgences. The remission by authorised priests of the punishment due to sin. The sale of indulgences was one of the abuses that provoked the Reformation.

Jerk. To cure meat, especially beef, by cutting it into long thin slices and drying it in the sun.

Jury-mast. A small temporary mast often made of a yard; set up instead of a mast that is broken down.

Larboard (or port). The left side of a ship looking towards the bow.

Lay to (lie to). To reduce sail to the lowest limits, so as to become nearly stationary.

Lee. The side or direction opposite to that from which the wind comes.

Line, ship of the. A ship of sufficient size and armament to take a place in the line of battle.

Linguist. Interpreter.

Longboat. See Boats.

Lumber. Sawn timber.

Masts:

The masts of a full-rigged three-masted ship are the following:

Fore-mast, topmast, topgallant-mast, royal mast.

Main-mast, topmast, topgallant-mast, royal mast.
Mizzen-mast, topmast, topgallant-mast, royal mast.

Monsoon. See Winds.

Mortar. A kind of gun with a very short bore. It throws its projectile at a great elevation.

Mortar, Cohorn (see chapter 7). Cohorn was a famous Dutch engineer and artillerist in the service of William III.

Nailed up. Spiked. To spike a gun is to render it useless for the time by inserting into the vent a steel pin with side springs, which when inserted open outwards to the shape of an arrowhead so that it cannot be released.

Offing: 1. The most distant part of the sea visible from the shore. 2. A still greater distance, sufficient to avoid the dangers of shipwreck, as "a good offing."

Overreach. To pass.

Parallel, *i.e.* of latitude or longitude as the case may be.

Pennant, Broad. See Commodore.

Pidreroes. Light Spanish cannon.

Pieces of eight. Old Spanish coins worth about four shillings each. The piece of eight was divided into eight silver reals. Hence the name which was applied to it in the Spanish Main. It was also frequently called a dollar.

Pike. A long shaft or pole, having an iron or steel point, used in medieval warfare, now replaced by the bayonet. A half-pike was a similar weapon having a staff about half the length.



Page 116

Pink. An obsolete name for a small sailing ship.

Pinnacle. See Boats.

Port (or larboard). The left side of a ship looking towards the bow.

Post-captain. An obsolete title for a captain of three years' standing.

Proa. A small Malay vessel.

Quarter. The upper part of a vessel's side from abaft the main mast to the stern.

Quarter gallery. A gallery is a balcony built outside the body of a ship: at the stern (stern gallery) or at the quarters (quarter gallery).

Reef. A portion of a sail that can be drawn close together.

Rosaries. Strings of beads used by Roman Catholics in praying. Each bead told (or counted) represents a prayer.

Scuttle. To make a hole in the bottom of a ship in order to sink it.

Serons (of dollars). A seron or seroon is a kind of small trunk made in Spanish America out of a piece of raw bullock's hide.

Service (of a cable). The part next the anchor secured by cordage wrapped round it.

Ship of the line. See Line.

Shrouds. The stout ropes that are stretched from a masthead of a vessel to the sides or to the rims of a top, serving as a means of ascent and as a lateral strengthening stays to the masts.

Sling. A rope or chain by which a lower yard is suspended.

Sprit-sail. A quadrangular sail stretched from the mast by the help, not of a gaff along its top, but of a sprit (or yard) extending from the mast diagonally to the upper aftmost corner of the sail, as in the case of a London barge.

Sprit-sail yard. Another name for the sprit.

Standing rigging. The parts of a vessel's rigging that are practically permanent.

Starboard. The right side of a ship looking towards the bow.

Stern-chasers. See Chasers.



Streaks (or strakes). Lines of planking.

Supercargo. A person employed by the owners of a ship to go a voyage and to oversee the cargo.

Tacks ("got our tacks on board," chapter 17). Ropes for hauling down and fastening the corners of certain sails.

Taffrail. The upper part of the stern of a ship.

Tie-wig. See Wig.

Tradewind. See Winds.

Transom. A beam across the stern-post to strengthen the after part of the ship.

Traverse. To turn guns to the right or left in aiming.

Wake. The track left by a ship.

Warp. To move a vessel into another position by hauling upon a hawser attached usually to the heads of piles or posts of a wharf.

Wear (a ship). To bring a ship about by putting the helm up. The vessel is first run off before the wind and then brought to on the new tack.

Weather: 1. The windward side. 2. To go to windward of.

Wig. A bag-wig is a wig with a bag to hold the back hair. It was fashionable in the seventeenth century. A tie-wig is a court wig tied with ribbon at the bag.

Page 117

Winds. The tradewinds are winds which blow all the year through on the open ocean in and near the torrid zone. In the northern hemisphere they blow from the north-east, in the southern from the south-east. The regularity of the tradewind is interfered with by the neighbourhood of large land masses. Their temperature varies much more with the change of seasons than that of the ocean; and this variation produces a change in the direction of the tradewind in the hot season, corresponding distantly to a phenomenon which may be observed, daily instead of half-yearly, on the English coast in hot summer weather, when a sea breeze blows during the day and a land breeze at night. In the northern hemisphere the monsoon—as this periodic wind is called—blows from the south-west (i.e. towards the heated continent of South Asia) from April to October, and from the north-east, as the ordinary trade wind, during the rest of the year.

Works, upper. The sides of a vessel's hull from the water-line to the covering board.