

Richard Carvel — Volume 03 eBook

Richard Carvel — Volume 03 by Winston Churchill

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MR. ALLEN SHOWS HIS HAND

So Dorothy's beauty had taken London by storm, even as it had conquered Annapolis! However, 'twas small consolation to me to hear his Grace of Chartersea called a pig and a profligate while better men danced her attendance in Mayfair. Nor, in spite of what his Lordship had said, was I quite easy on the score of the duke. It was in truth no small honour to become a duchess. If Mr. Marmaduke had aught to say, there was an end to hope. She would have her coronet. But in that hour of darkness I counted upon my lady's spirit.

Dr. Courtenay came to the assembly very late, with a new fashion of pinchbeck buckles on his pumps and a new manner of taking snuff. (I caught Fotheringay practising this by the stairs shortly after.) Always an important man, the doctor's prominence had been increased that day by the letter he had received. He was too thorough a courtier to profess any grief over Miss Manners's match, and went about avowing that he had always predicted a duke for Miss Dorothy. And he drew a deal of pleasure from the curiosity of those who begged but one look at the letter. Show it, indeed! For no consideration. A private communication from one gentleman to another must be respected. Will Fotheringay swore the doctor was a sly dog, and had his own reasons for keeping it to himself.

The doctor paid his compliment to the captain of the Thunderer, and to his Lordship; hoped that he would see them at the meet on the morrow, tho' his gout forbade his riding to hounds. He saluted me in the most friendly way, for I played billiards with him at the Coffee House now, and he won my money. He had pronounced my phaeton to be as well appointed as any equipage in town, and had done me the honour to drive out with me on several occasions. It was Betty that brought him humiliation that evening.

"What do you think of the soar our Pandora hath taken, Miss Betty?" says he. "From a Maryland manor to a ducal palace. 'Tis a fable, egad! No less!"

"Indeed, I think it is," retorted Betty. "Mark me, doctor, Dorothy will not put up an instant with a rouse and a brute."

"A rouse!" cries he, "and a brute! What the plague, Miss Tayloe! I vow I do not understand you."

"Then ask my Lord Comyn, who knows your Duke of Chartersea," said Betty.

Dr. Courtenay's expression was worth a pistole.

"Comyn know him!" he repeated.

“That he does,” replied Betty, laughing. “His Lordship says Chartersea is a pig and a profligate, and I remember not what else. And that Dolly will not look at him. And so little Mr. Marmaduke may go a-hunting for another title.”

No wonder I had little desire for dancing that night! I wandered out of the assembly-room and through the silent corridors of the Stadt House, turning over and over again what I had heard, and picturing Dorothy reigning over the macaronies of St. James’s Street. She had said nothing of this in her letter to Betty, and had asked me to write to her. But now, with a duke to refuse or accept, could she care to hear from her old playmate? I took no thought of the time, until suddenly my conscience told me I had neglected Patty.

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As I entered the hall I saw her at the far end of it talking to Mr. Allen. This I thought strange, for I knew she disliked him. Lord Comyn and Mr. Carroll, the barrister, and Singleton, were standing by, listening. By the time I was halfway across to them the rector turned away. I remember thinking afterwards that he changed colour when he said: "Your servant, Mr. Richard." But I thought nothing of it at the time, and went on to Patty.

"I have come for a country dance, before we go, Patty," I said.

Then something in her mien struck me. Her eyes expressed a pain I had remarked in them before only when she spoke to me of Tom, and her lips were closed tightly. She flushed, and paled, and looked from Singleton to Mr. Carroll. They and his Lordship remained silent.

"I—I cannot, Richard. I am going home," she said, in a low voice.

"I will see if the chariot is here," I answered, surprised, but thinking of Tom.

She stopped me.

"I am going with Mr. Carroll," she said.

I hope a Carvel never has to be rebuffed twice, nor to be humbled by craving an explanation before a company. I was confounded that Patty should treat me thus, when I had done nothing to deserve it. As I made for the door, burning and indignant, I felt as tho' every eye in the room was upon me.' Young Harvey drove me that night.

"Marlboro' Street, Mr. Richard?" said he.

"Coffee House," replied I, that place coming first into my head.

Young Harvey seldom took liberties; but he looked down from the box.

"Better home, sir; your pardon, sir."

"D—n it!" I cried, "drive where I bid you!"

I pulled down the fore-glass, though the night was cold, and began to cast about for the cause of Patty's action. And then it was the rector came to my mind. Yes, he had been with her just before I came up, and I made sure on the instant that my worthy instructor was responsible for the trouble. I remembered that I had quarrelled with him the morning before I had gone to Bentley Manor, and threatened to confess his villany and my deceit to Mr. Carvel. He had answered me with a sneer and a dare. I knew than Patty put honour and honesty before all else in the world, and that she would not have suffered my friendship for a day had she believed me to lack either. But she, who knew

me so well, was not likely to believe anything he might say without giving me the chance to clear myself. And what could he have told her?

I felt my anger growing big within me, until I grew afraid of what I would do if I were tempted. I had a long score and a heavy score against this rector of St. Anne's,—a score that had been gathering these years. And I felt that my uncle was somewhere behind him; that the two of them were plotters against me, even as Harvey had declared; albeit my Uncle Grafton was little seen in his company now. And finally, in a sinister

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flash of revelation, came the thought that Grafton himself was at the back of this deception of my grandfather, as to my principles. Fool that I was, it had never occurred to me before. But how was he to gain by it? Did he hope that Mr. Carvel, in a fit of anger, would disinherit me when he found I had deceived him? Yes. And so had left the matter in abeyance near these two years, that the shock might be the greater when it came. I recalled now, with a shudder, that never since the spring of my grandfather's illness had my uncle questioned me upon my politics. I was seized with a fit of fury. I suspected that Mr. Allen would be at the Coffee House after the assembly. And I determined to seize the chance at once and have it out with him then and there.

The inn was ablaze, but as yet deserted; Mr. Claude expectant. He bowed me from my chariot door, and would know what took me from the ball. I threw him some short answer, bade Harvey go home, saying that I would have some fellow light me to Marlboro' Street when I thought proper. And coming into the long room I flung aside my greatcoat and commanded a flask of Mr. Stephen Bordley's old sherry, some of which Mr. Claude had obtained at that bachelor's demise.

The wine was scarce opened before I heard some sort of stir at the front, and two servants in a riding livery of scarlet and white hurried in to seek Mr. Claude. The sight of them sufficed mine host, for he went out as fast as his legs would go, giving the bell a sharp pull as he passed the door; and presently I heard him complimenting two gentlemen into the house. The voice of one I knew,—being no other than Captain Clapsaddle's; and him I had not seen for the past six months. I was just risen to my feet when they came in at the door beside me.

"Richard!" cried the captain, and grasped my hand in both his own. I returned his pressure, too much pleased to speak. Then his eye was caught by my finery.

"So ho!" says he, shaking his head at me for a sad rogue. "Wine and women and fine clothes, and not nineteen, or I mistake me. It was so with Captain Jack, who blossomed in a week; and few could vie with him, I warrant you, after he made his decision. But bless me!" he went on, drawing back, "the lad looks mature, and a fair two inches broader than last spring. But why are you not at the assembly, Richard?"

"I have but now come from there, sir," I replied, not caring in the presence of a stranger to enter into reasons.

At my answer the captain turned from me to the gentleman behind him, who had been regarding us both as we talked. There are some few men in the world, I thank God for it, who bear their value on their countenance; who stand unmistakably for qualities which command respect and admiration and love! We seem to recognize such men, and to wonder where we have seen them before. In reality we recognize the virtues

they represent. So it was with him I saw in front of me, and by his air and carriage I marked him then and there as a man born to great things. You all know his face, my dears, and I pray God it may live in the sight of those who come after you, for generation upon generation!

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“Colonel Washington,” said the captain, “this is Mr. Richard Carvel, the son of Captain Carvel.”

Mr. Washington did not speak at once. He stood regarding me a full minute, his eye seeming to penetrate the secrets of my life. And I take pride in saying it was an eye I could meet without flinching.

“Your father was a brave man, sir,” he said soberly, “and it seems you favour him. I am happy in knowing the son.”

For a moment he stood debating whether he would go to the house of one of his many friends in Annapolis, knowing that they would be offended when they learned he had stopped at the inn. He often came to town, indeed, but seldom tarried long; and it had never been my fortune to see him. Being arrived unexpectedly, and obliged to be away early on the morrow, he decided to order rooms of Mr. Claude, sat down with me at the table, and commenced supper. They had ridden from Alexandria. I gathered from their conversation that they were on their way to Philadelphia upon some private business, the nature of which, knowing Captain Daniel’s sentiments and those of Colonel Washington, I went not far to guess. The country was in a stir about the Townshend duties; and there being some rumour that all these were to be discharged save only that on tea, anxiety prevailed in our middle colonies that the merchants of New York would abandon the association formed and begin importation. It was of some mission to these merchants that I suspected them.

As I sat beside Colonel Washington, I found myself growing calmer, and ashamed of my lack of self-control. Unconsciously, when we come in contact with the great of character, we mould our minds to their qualities. His very person seemed to exhale, not sanctity, but virility. I felt that this man could command himself and others. In his presence self-command came to me, as a virtue gone out of him. ’Twas not his speech, I would have you know, that took hold of me. He was by no means a brilliant talker, and I had the good fortune to see him at his ease, since he and the captain were old friends. As they argued upon the questions of the day, the colonel did not seek to impress by words, or to fascinate by manner. His opinions were calm and moderate, and appeared to me so just as to admit of no appeal. He scrupled not to use a forceful word when occasion demanded. And yet, now and then, he had a lively way about him with all his dignity. When he had finished his supper he bade Mr. Claude bring another bottle of Mr. Bordley’s sherry, having tested mine, and addressed himself to me.

He would know what my pursuits had been; for my father’s sake, what were my ambitions? He questioned me about Mr. Carvel’s plantation, of which he had heard, and appeared pleased with the answers I gave as to its management and methods. Captain Daniel was no less so. Mr. Washington had agriculture at his finger ends, and gave me some advice which he had found serviceable at Mount Vernon.

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“’Tis a pity, Richard,” said he, smiling thoughtfully at the captain, “’tis a pity we have no service afield open to our young men. One of your spirit and bearing should be of that profession. Captain Jack was as brave and dashing an officer as I ever laid eyes on.”

I hesitated, the tingling at the compliment.

“I begin to think I was born for the sea, sir,” I answered, at length.

“What!” cried the captain; “what news is this, Richard? ’Slife! how has this come about?”

My anger subdued by Mr. Washington’s presence, a curious mood had taken its place. A foolish mood, I thought it, but one of feeling things to come.

“I believe I shall one day take part in a great sea-fight,” I said. And, tho’ ashamed to speak of it, I told him of Stanwix’s prophecy that I should pace the decks of a man-o’-war.

“A pox on Stanwix!” said the captain, “an artful old seadog! I never yet knew one who did not think the sun rises and sets from poop to fore-castle, who did not wheedle with all the young blood to get them to follow a bow-legged profession.”

Colonel Washington laughed.

“Judge not, Clapsaddle,” said he; “here are two of us trying to get the lad for our own bow-legged profession. We are as hot as Methodists to convert.”

“Small conversion he needed when I was here to watch him, colonel. And he rides with any trooper I ever laid eyes on. Why, sir, I myself threw him on a saddle before he could well-nigh walk, and ’twere a waste of material to put him in the navy.”

“But what this old man said of a flag not yet seen in heaven or earth interests me,” said Colonel Washington. “Tell me,” he added with a penetration we both remarked, “tell me, does your Captain Stanwix follow the times? Is he a man to read his prints and pamphlets? In other words, is he a man who might predict out of his own heated imagination?”

“Nay, sir,” I answered, “he nods over his tobacco the day long. And I will make bold to swear, he has never heard of the Stamp Act.”

“’Tis strange,” said the colonel, musing; “I have heard of this second sight—have seen it among my own negroes. But I heartily pray that this may be but the childish fancy of an old mariner. How do you interpret it, sir?” he added, addressing himself to me.

“If a prophecy, I can interpret it in but one way,” I began, and there I stopped.

“To be sure,” said Mr. Washington. He studied me awhile as though weighing my judgment, and went on: “Needless to say, Richard, that such a service, if it comes, will not be that of his Majesty.”

“And it were, colonel, I would not embark in it a step,” I cried.

He laughed.

“The lad has his father’s impulse,” he said to Captain Daniel. “But I thought old Mr. Carvel to be one of the warmest loyalists in the colonies.”

I bit my lip; for, since that unhappy deception of Mr. Carvel, I had not meant to be drawn into an avowal of my sentiments. But I had, alas, inherited a hasty tongue.

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"Mr. Washington," said the captain, "old Mr. Carvel has ever been a good friend to me. And, though I could not but perceive which way the lad was tending, I had held it but a poor return for friendship had I sought by word or deed to bring him to my way of thinking. Nor have I ever suffered his views in my presence."

"My dear sir, I honour you for it," put in the colonel, warmly.

"It is naught to my credit," returned the captain. "I would not, for the sake of my party and beliefs, embitter what remains of my old friend's life."

I drew a long breath and drained the full glass before me.

"Captain Daniel!" I cried, "you must hear me now. I have been waiting your coming these months. And if Colonel Washington gives me leave, I will speak before him."

The colonel bade me proceed, avowing that Captain Carvel's son should have his best assistance.

With that I told them the whole story of Mr. Allen's villany. How I had been sent to him because of my Whig sentiments, and for thrashing a Tory schoolmaster and his flock. This made the gentlemen laugh, tho' Captain Daniel had heard it before. I went on to explain how Mr. Carvel had fallen ill, and was like to die; and how Mr. Allen, taking advantage of his weakness when he rose from his bed, had gone to him with the lie of having converted me. But when I told of the scene between my grandfather and me at Carvel Hall, of the tears of joy that the old gentleman shed, and of how he had given me Firefly as a reward, the captain rose from his chair and looked out of the window into the blackness, and swore a great oath all to himself. And the expression I saw come into the colonel's eyes I shall never forget.

"And you feared the consequences upon your grandfather's health?" he asked gravely.

"So help me God!" I answered, "I truly believe that to have undeceived him would have proved fatal."

"And so, for the sake of the sum he receives for teaching you," cried the captain, with another oath, "this scoundrelly clergyman has betrayed you into a lie. A scheme, by God's life! worthy of a Machiavelli!"

"I have seen too many of his type in our parishes," said Mr. Washington; "and yet the bishop of London seems powerless. And so used have we become in these Southern colonies to tippling and gaming parsons, that I warrant his people accept him as nothing out of the common."

“He is more discreet than the run of them, sir. His parishioners dislike him, not because of his irregularities, but because he is attempting to obtain All Saints from his Lordship, in addition to St. Anne’s. He is thought too greedy.”

He was silent, his brow a little furrowed, and drummed with his fingers upon the table.

“But this I cannot reconcile,” said he, presently, “that the reward is out of all proportion to the risk. Such a clever rascal must play for higher stakes.”

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I was amazed at his insight. And for the moment was impelled to make a clean breast of my suspicions,—nay, of my convictions of the whole devil's plot. But I had no proofs. I remembered that to the colonel my uncle was a gentleman of respectability and of wealth, and a member of his Excellency's Council. That to accuse him of scheming for my inheritance would gain me nothing in Mr. Washington's esteem. And I caught myself before I had said aught of Mr. Allen's conduct that evening.

"Have you confronted this rector with his perfidy, Richard?" he asked.

"I have, colonel, at my first opportunity." And I related how Mr. Allen had come to the Hall, and what I had said to him, and how he had behaved. And finally told of the picquet we now had during lessons, not caring to shield myself. Both listened intently, until the captain broke out. Mr. Washington's indignation was the stronger for being repressed.

"I will call him out!" cried Captain Daniel, fingering his sword, as was his wont when angered; "I will call him out despite his gown, or else horse him publicly!"

"No, my dear sir, you will do nothing of the kind," said the colonel. "You would gain nothing by it for the lad, and lose much. Such rascals walk in water, and are not to be tracked. He cannot be approached save through Mr. Lionel Carvel himself, and that channel, for Mr. Carvel's sake, must be closed."

"But he must be shown up!" cried the captain.

"What good will you accomplish?" said Mr. Washington; "Lord Baltimore is notorious, and will not remove him. Nay, sir, you must find a way to get the lad from his influence." And he asked me how was my grandfather's health at present.

I said that he had mended beyond my hopes.

"And does he seem to rejoice that you are of the King's party?"

"Nay, sir. Concerning politics he seems strangely apathetic, which makes me fear he is not so well as he appears. All his life he has felt strongly."

"Then I beg you, Richard, take pains to keep neutral. Nor let any passing event, however great, move you to speech or action."

The captain shook his head doubtfully, as tho' questioning the ability of one of my temper to do this.

"I do not trust myself, sir," I answered.

He rose, declaring it was past his hour for bed, and added some kind things which I shall cherish in my memory. As he was leaving he laid his hand on my shoulder.

“One word of advice, my lad,” he said. “If by any chance your convictions are to come to your grandfather’s ears, let him have them from your own lips.” And he bade me good night.

The captain tarried but a moment longer.

“I have a notion who is to blame for this, Richard,” he said. “When I come back from New York, we shall see what we shall see.”

“I fear he is too slippery for a soldier to catch,” I answered.

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He went away to bed, telling me to be prudent, and mind the colonel's counsel until he returned from the North.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VOLTE COUPE

I was of a serious mind to take the advice. To prove this I called for my wrap-rascal and cane, and for a fellow with a flambeau to light me. But just then the party arrived from the assembly. I was tempted, and I sat down again in a corner of the room, resolved to keep a check upon myself, but to stay awhile.

The rector was the first in, humming a song, and spied me.

"Ho!" he cried, "will you drink, Richard? Or do I drink with you?"

He was already purple with wine.

"God save me from you and your kind!" I replied.

"Sblood! what a devil's nest of fireworks!" he exclaimed, as he went off down the room, still humming, to where the rest were gathered. And they were soon between bottle and stopper, and quips a-coursing. There was the captain of the Thunderer, Collinson by name, Lord Comyn and two brother officers, Will Fotheringay, my cousin Philip, openly pleased to be found in such a company, and some dozen other toadeaters who had followed my Lord a-chair and a-foot from the ball, and would have tracked him to perdition had he chosen to go; and lastly Tom Swain, leering and hiccoughing at the jokes, in such a beastly state of drunkenness as I had rarely seen him. His Lordship recognized me and smiled, and was pushing his chair back, when something Collinson said seemed to restrain him.

I believe I was the butt of more than one jest for my aloofness, though I could not hear distinctly for the noise they made. I commanded some French cognac, and kept my eye on the rector, and the sight of him was making me dangerous.

I forgot the advice I had received, and remembered only the months he had goaded me. And I was even beginning to speculate how I could best pick a quarrel with him on any issue but politics, when an unexpected incident diverted me. Of a sudden the tall, ungainly form of Percy Singleton filled the doorway, wrapped in a greatcoat. He swept the room at a glance, and then strode rapidly toward the corner where I sat.

"I had thought to find you here," he said, and dropped into a chair beside me. I offered him wine, but he refused.

“Now,” he went on, “what has Patty done?”

“What have I done that I should be publicly insulted?” I cried.

“Insulted!” says he, “and did she insult you? She said nothing of that.”

“What brings you here, then?” I demanded.

“Not to talk, Richard,” he said quietly, “’tis no time tonight. I came to fetch you home. Patty sent me.”

Patty sent him! Why had Patty sent him? But this I did not ask, for I felt the devil within me.

“We must first finish this bottle,” said I, offhand, “and then I have a little something to be done which I have set my heart upon. After that I will go with you.”

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"Richard, Richard, will you never learn prudence? What is it you speak of?"

I drew my sword and laid it upon the table.

"I mean to spit that eel of a rector," said I, "or he will bear a slap in the face. And you must see fair play."

Singleton seized my coat, at the same time grasping the hilt of my sword with the other hand. But neither my words nor my action had gone unnoticed by the other end of the room. The company there fell silent awhile, and then we heard Captain Collinson talking in even, drawling tones.

"'Tis strange," said he, "what hot sparks a man meets in these colonies. They should be stamped out. His Majesty pampers these d—d Americans, is too lenient by far. Gentlemen, this is how I would indulge them!" He raised a closed fist and brought it down on the board.

He spoke to Tories, but he forgot that Tories were Americans. In those days only the meanest of the King's party would listen to such without protest from an Englishman. But some of the meaner sort were there: Philip and Tom laughed, and Mr. Allen, and my Lord's sycophants. Fotheringay and some others of sense shook their heads one to another, comprehending that Captain Collinson was somewhat gone in wine. For, indeed, he had not strayed far from the sideboard at the assembly. Comyn made a motion to rise.

"It is already past three bells, sir, and a hunt to-morrow," he said.

"From bottle to saddle, and from saddle to bottle, my Lord. We must have our pleasure ashore, and sleep at sea," and the captain tipped his flask with a leer. He turned his eye uncertainly first on me, then on my Lord. "We are lately from Boston, gentlemen, that charnel-house of treason, and before we leave, my Lord, I must tell them how Mr. Robinson of the customs served that dog Otis, in the British Coffee House. God's word, 'twas as good as a play."

I know not how many got to their feet at that, for the story of the cowardly beating of Mr. Otis by Robinson and the army officers had swept over the colonies, burning like a flame all true-hearted men, Tory and Whig alike. I wrested my sword from Singleton's hold, and in a trice I had reached the captain over chairs and table, tearing myself from Fotheringay on the way. I struck a blow that measured a man on the floor. Then I drew back, amazed.

I had hit Lord Comyn instead! The captain stood a yard beyond me.

The thing had been so deftly done by the rector of St. Anne's—Comyn jostled at the proper moment between me and Collinson—that none save me guessed beyond an



accident; least of all my Lord Comyn himself. He was up again directly and his sword drawn, addressing me.

“Bear witness, my Lord, that I have no desire to fight with you,” said I, with what coolness I could muster. “But there is one here I would give much for a chance to run through.”

And I made a step toward Mr. Allen with such a purpose in my face and movements that he could not mistake. I saw the blood go from his face; yet he was no coward to physical violence. But he (or I?) was saved by the Satan’s luck that followed him, for my Lord stepped in between us with a bow, his cheek red where I had struck him.

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"It is my quarrel now, Mr. Carvel," he cried.

"As you please, my Lord," said I.

"It boots not who crosses with him," Captain Collinson put in. "His Lordship uses the sword better than any here. But it boots not so that he is opposed by a loyal servant of the King."

I wheeled on him for this.

"I would have you know that loyalty does not consist in outrage and murder, sir," I answered, "nor in the ridiculing of them. And brutes cannot be loyal save through interest."

He was angered, as I had desired. I had hopes then of shouldering the quarrel on to him, for I had near as soon drawn against my own brother as against Comyn. I protest I loved him then as one with whom I had been reared.

"Let me deal with this young gamecock, Comyn," cried the captain, with an oath. "He seems to think his importance sufficient."

But Comyn would brook no interference. He swore that no man should strike him with impunity, and in this I could not but allow he was right.

"You shall hear from me, Mr. Carvel," he said.

"Nay," I answered, "and fighting is to be done, sir, let us be through with it at once. A large room upstairs is at our disposal; and there is a hunt to-morrow which one of us may like to attend."

There was a laugh at this, in which his Lordship joined.

"I would to God, Mr. Carvel," he said, "that I had no quarrel with you!"

"Amen to that, my Lord," I replied; "there are others here I would rather fight." And I gave a meaning look at Mr. Allen. I was of two minds to announce the scurvy trick he had played, but saw that I would lose rather than gain by the attempt. Up to that time the wretch had not spoken a word; now he pushed himself forward, though well clear of me.

"I think it my duty as Mr. Carvel's tutor, gentlemen, to protest against this matter proceeding," he said, a sneer creeping into his voice. "Nor can I be present at it. Mr. Carvel is young and, besides, is not himself with liquor. And, in the choice of politics, he knows not which leg he stands upon. My Lord and gentlemen, your most humble and devoted."

He made a bow and, before the retort on my lips could be spoken, left the tavern. My cousin Philip left with him. Tom Swain had fallen asleep in his chair.

Captain Collinson and Mr. Furness, of the Thunderer, offered to serve his Lordship, which made me bethink that I, too, would have need of some one. 'Twas then I remembered Singleton, who had passed from my mind.

He was standing close behind me, and nodded simply when I asked him. And Will Fotheringay came forward.

"I will act, Richard, if you allow me," he said. "I would have you know I am in no wise hostile to you, my Lord, and I am of the King's party. But I admire Mr. Carvel, and I may say I am not wholly out of sympathy with that which prompted his act."

It was a noble speech, and changed Will in my eyes; and I thanked him with warmth. He of all that company had the courage to oppose his Lordship!

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Mr. Claude was called in and, as is the custom in such cases, was told that some of us would play awhile above. He was asked for his private room. The good man had his suspicions, but could not refuse a party of such distinction, and sent a drawer thither with wine and cards. Presently we followed, leaving the pack of toadies in sad disappointment below.

We gathered about the table and made shift at loo until the fellow had retired, when the seconds proceeded to clear the room of furniture, and Lord Comyn and I stripped off our coats and waistcoats. I had lost my anger, but felt no fear, only a kind of pity that blood should be shed between two so united in spirit as we. Yes, my dears, I thought of Dorothy. If I died, she would hear that it was like a man—like a Carvel. But the thought of my old grandfather tightened my heart. Then the clock on the inn stairs struck two, and the noise of harsh laughter floated up to us from below.

And Comyn,—of what was he thinking? Of some fair home set upon the downs across the sea, of some heroic English mother who had kept her tears until he was gone? Her image rose in dumb entreaty, invoked by the lad before me. What a picture was he in his spotless shirt with the ruffles, his handsome boyish face all that was good and honest!

I had scarce felt his Lordship's wrist than I knew I had to deal with a pupil of Angelo. At first his attacks were all simple, without feint or trickery, as were mine. Collinson cursed and cried out that it was buffoonery, and called on my Lord not to let me off so easily; swore that I fenced like a mercer, that he could have stuck me like a pin-cushion twenty and twenty times. Often have I seen two animals thrust into a pit with nothing but goodwill between them, and those without force them into anger and a deadly battle. And so it was, unconsciously, between Comyn and me. I forgot presently that I was not dealing with Captain Collinson, and my feelings went into my sword. Comyn began to press me, nor did I give back. And then, before it came over me that we had to do with life and death, he was upon me with a volte coupe, feinting in high carte and thrusting in low tierce, his point passing through a fold in my shirt. And I were not alive to write these words had I not leaped out of his measure.

"Bravo, Richard!" cried Fotheringay.

"Well made, gads life!" from Mr. Furness.

We engaged again, our faces hot. Now I knew that if I did not carry the matter against him I should be killed out of hand, and Heaven knows I was not used to play a passive part. I began to go carefully, but fiercely; tried one attack after another that my grandfather and Captain Daniel had taught me,—flanconnades, beats, and lunges. Comyn held me even, and in truth I had much to do to defend myself. Once I thought I had him in the sword-arm, after a circular parry, but he was too quick for me. We were

sweating freely by now, and by reason of the buzzing in my ears I could scarce hear the applause of the seconds.

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What unlucky chance it was I know not that impelled Comyn to essay again the trick by which he had come so near to spitting me; but try it he did, this time in prime and seconde. I had come by nature to that intuition which a true swordsman must have, gleaned from the eyes of his adversary. Long ago Captain Daniel had taught me the remedy for this coupe. I parried, circled, and straightened, my body in swift motion and my point at Comyn's heart, when Heaven brought me recollection in the space of a second. My sword rang clattering on the floor.

His Lordship understood, but too late. Despairing his life, he made one wild lunge at me that had never gone home had I held to my hilt. But the rattle of the blade had scarce reached my ears when there came a sharp pain at my throat, and the room faded before me. I heard the clock striking the half-hour.

I was blessed with a sturdy health such as few men enjoy, and came to myself sooner than had been looked for, with a dash of cold water. And the first face I beheld was that of Colonel Washington. I heard him speaking in a voice that was calm, yet urgent and commanding.

"I pray you, gentlemen, give back. He is coming to, and must have air. Fetch some linen!"

"Now God be praised!" I heard Captain Daniel cry.

With that his Lordship began to tear his own shirt into strips, and the captain bringing a bowl and napkin, the colonel himself washed the wound and bound it deftly, Singleton and Captain Daniel assisting. When Mr. Washington had finished, he turned to Comyn, who stood, anxious and dishevelled, at my feet.

"You may be thankful that you missed the artery, my Lord," he said.

"With all my heart, Colonel Washington!" cried his Lordship. "I owe my life to his generosity."

"What's that, sir?"

Mr. Carvel dropped his sword, rather than run me through."

"I'll warrant!" Captain Daniel put in; "'Od's heart! The lad has skill to point the eye of a button. I taught him myself."

Colonel Washington stood up and laid his hand on the captain's arm.

"He is Jack Carvel over again," I heard him say, in a low voice.



I tried to struggle to my feet, to speak, but he restrained me. And sending for his servants, he ordered them to have his baggage removed from the Roebuck, which was the best bed in the house. At this moment the door opened, and Mr. Swain came in hurriedly.

"I pray you, gentlemen," he cried, "and he is fit to be moved, you will let me take him to Marlboro' Street. I have a chariot at the door."

CHAPTER XV

OF WHICH THE RECTOR HAS THE WORST

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'Twas late when I awoke the next day with something of a dull ache in my neck, and a prodigious stiffness, studying the pleatings of the bed canopy over my head. And I know not how long I lay idly thus when I perceived Mrs. Willis moving quietly about, and my grandfather sitting in the armchair by the window, looking into Freshwater Lane. As my eyes fell upon him my memory came surging back,—first of the duel, then of its cause. And finally, like a leaden weight, the thought of the deception I had practised upon him, of which he must have learned ere this. Nay, I was sure from the troubled look of his face that he knew of it.

“Mr. Carvel,” I said.

At the sound of my voice he got hastily from his chair and hurried to my side.

“Richard,” he answered, taking my hand, “Richard!”

I opened my mouth to speak, to confess. But he prevented me, the tears filling the wrinkles around his eyes.

“Nay, lad, nay. We will not talk of it. I know all.”

“Mr. Allen has been here—” I began.

“And be d—d to him! Be d—d to him for a wolf in sheep’s clothing!” shouted my grandfather, his manner shifting so suddenly to anger that I was taken back. “So help me God I will never set foot in St. Anne’s while he is rector. Nor shall he come to this house!”

And he took three or four disorderly turns about the room.

“Ah!” he continued more quietly, with something of a sigh, “I might have known how stubborn your mind should be. That you was never one to blow from the north one day and from the south the next. I deny not that there be good men and able of your way of thinking: Colonel Washington, for one, whom I admire and honour; and our friend Captain Daniel. They have been here to-day, Richard, and I promise you were good advocates.”

Then I knew that I was forgiven. And I could have thrown myself at Mr. Carvel’s feet for happiness.

“Has Colonel Washington spoken in my favour, sir?”

“That he has. He is upon some urgent business for the North, I believe, which he delayed for your sake. Both he and the captain were in my dressing-room before I was up, ahead of that scurrilous clergyman, who was for pushing his way to my bed-curtains. Ay, the two of them were here at nigh dawn this morning, and Mr. Allen close

after them. And I own that Captain Daniel can swear with such a consuming violence as to put any rogue out of countenance. 'Twas all Mr. Washington could do to restrain Clapsaddle from booting his Reverence over the balustrade and down two runs of the stairs, the captain declaring he would do for every cur's son of the whelps. 'Diomedes,' says I, waking up, 'what's this damnable racket on the landing? Is Mr. Richard home?' For I had some notion it was you, sir, after an over-night brawl. And I profess I would have caned you soundly. The fellow answered that Captain Clapsaddle's honour was killing Mr. Allen, and went out; and came back presently to say that some tall gentleman had the captain by the neck, and that Mr. Allen was picking his way down the ice on the steps outside. With that I went in to them in my dressing-gown.

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“What’s all this to-do, gentlemen?” said I.

“‘I’d have finished that son of a dog,’ says the captain, ‘and Colonel Washington had let me.’

“What, what!” said I. ‘How now? What! Drive a clergyman from my house gentlemen?’

“What’s Richard been at now?’

“Mr. Washington asked me to dress, saying that they had something very particular to speak about; that they would stay to breakfast with me, tho’ they were in haste to be gone to New York. I made my compliments to the colonel and had them shown to the library fire, and hurried down after them. Then they told me of this affair last night, and they cleared you, sir. ‘Faith,’ cried I, ‘and I would have fought, too. The lad was in the right of it, though I would have him a little less hasty.’ D—n me if I don’t wish you had knocked that sea captain’s teeth into his throat, and his brains with them. I like your spirit, sir. A pox on such men as he, who disgrace his Majesty’s name and set better men against him.”

“And they told you nothing else, sir?” I asked, with misgiving.

“That they did. Mr. Washington repeated the confession you made to them, sir, in a manner that did you credit. He made me compliments on you, —said that you were a man, sir, though a trifle hasty: in the which I agreed. Yes, d—n me, a trifle hasty like your father. I rejoice that you did not kill his Lordship, my son.”

The twilight was beginning; and the old gentleman going back to his chair was set amusing, gazing out across the bare trees and gables falling gray after the sunset.

What amazed me was that he did not seem to be shocked by the revelation near as much as I had feared. So this matter had brought me happiness where I looked for nothing but sorrow.

“And the gentlemen are gone north, sir?” said I, after a while.

“Yes, Richard, these four hours. I commanded an early dinner for them, since the colonel was pleased to tarry long enough for a little politics and to spin a glass. And I profess, was I to live neighbours with such a man, I might come to his way of thinking, despite myself. Though I say it that shouldn’t, some of his Majesty’s ministers are d—d rascals.”

I laughed. As I live, I never hoped to hear such words from my grandfather’s lips.

“He did not seek to convince, like so many of your hotheaded know-it-alls,” said Mr. Carvel; “he leaves a man to convince himself. He has great parts, Richard, and few can



stand before him.” He paused. And then his smooth-shaven face became creased in a roguish smile which I had often seen upon it. “What baggage is this I hear of that you quarrelled over at the assembly? Ah, Sir, I fear you are become but a sad rake!” says he.

But by great good fortune Dr. Leiden was shown in at this instant. And the candles being lighted, he examined my neck, haranguing the while in his vile English against the practice of duelling. He bade me keep my bed for two days, thereby giving me no great pleasure.

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"As I hope to live," said Mr. Carvel when the doctor was gone, "one would have thought his Excellency himself had been pinked instead of a whip of a lad, for the people who have been here. His Lordship and Dr. Courtenay came before the hunt, and young Mr. Fotheringay, and half a score of others. Mr. Swain is but now left to go to Baltimore on some barrister's business."

I was burning to learn what the rector had said to Patty, but it was plain Mr. Carvel knew nothing of this part of the story. He had not mentioned Grafton among the callers. I wondered what course my uncle would now pursue, that his plans to alienate me from my grandfather had failed. And I began debating whether or not to lay the whole plot before Mr. Carvel. Prudence bade me wait, since Grafton had not consorted with the rector openly, at least—for more than a year. And yet I spoke.

"Mr. Carvel!"

He stirred in his chair.

"Yes, my son."

He had to repeat, and still I held my tongue. Even as I hesitated there came a knock at the door, and Scipio entered, bearing candles.

"Massa Grafton, suh," he said.

My uncle was close at his heels. He was soberly dressed in dark brown silk, and his face wore that expression of sorrow and concern he knew how to assume at will. After greeting his father with his usual ceremony, he came to my bedside and asked gravely how I did.

"How now, Grafton!" cried Mr. Carvel; "this is no funeral. The lad has only a scratch, thank God!"

My uncle looked at me and forced a smile.

"Indeed I am rejoiced to find you are not worried over this matter, father," said he. "I am but just back from Kent to learn of it, and looked to find you in bed."

"Why, no, sir, I am not worried. I fought a duel in my own day,—over a lass, it was."

This time Grafton's smile was not forced.

"Over a lass, was it?" he asked, and added in a tone of relief, "and how do you, nephew?"

Mr. Carvel saved me from replying.



“Od’s life!” he cried; “no, I did not say this was over a lass. I have heard the whole matter; how Captain Collinson, who is a disgrace to the service, brought shame upon his Majesty’s supporters, and how Richard felled the young lord instead. I’ll be sworn, and I had been there, I myself would have run the brute through.”

My uncle did not ask for further particulars, but took a chair, and a dish of tea from Scipio. His smug look told me plainer than words that he thought my grandfather still ignorant of my Whig sentiments.

“I often wish that this deplorable practice of duelling might be legislated against,” he remarked. “Was there no one at the Coffee House with character enough to stop the lads?”

Here was my chance.

“Mr. Allen was there,” I said.

“A devil’s plague upon him!” shouted my grandfather, beating the floor with his stick. “And the lying hypocrite ever crosses my path, by gad’s life! I’ll tear his gown from his back!”

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I watched Grafton narrowly. Such as he never turn pale, but he set down his tea so hastily as to spill the most of it on the dresser.

“Why, you astound me, my dear father!” he faltered; “Mr. Allen a lying hypocrite? What can he have done?”

“Done!” cried my grandfather, sputtering and red as a cherry with indignation. “He is as rotten within as a pricked pear, I tell you, sir! For the sake of retaining the lad in his tuition he came to me and lied, sir, just after I had escaped death, and said that by his influence Richard had become loyal, and set dependence upon Richard’s fear of the shock ’twould give me if he confessed—Richard, who never told me a falsehood in his life! And instead of teaching him, he has gamed with the lad at the rectory. I dare make oath he has treated your son to a like instruction. ’Slife, sir, and he had his deserts, he would hang from a gibbet at the Town Gate.”

I raised up in bed to see the effect of this on my uncle. But however the wind veered, Grafton could steer a course. He got up and began pacing the room, and his agitation my grandfather took for indignation such as his own.

“The dog!” he cried fiercely. “The villain! Philip shall leave him to-morrow. And to think that it was I who moved you to put Richard to him!”

His distress seemed so real that Mr. Carvel replied:

“No, Grafton, ’twas not your fault. You were deceived as much as I. You have put your own son to him. But if I live another twelve hours I shall write his Lordship to remove him. What! You shake your head, sir!”

“It will not do,” said my uncle. “Lord Baltimore has had his reasons for sending such a scoundrel—he knew what he was, you may be sure, father. His Lordship, sir, is the most abandoned rake in London, and that unmentionable crime of his but lately in the magazines—”

“Yes, yes,” my grandfather interrupted; “I have seen it. But I will publish him in Annapolis.”

My uncle’s answer startled me, so like was it to the argument Colonel Washington himself had used.

“What would you publish, sir? Mr. Allen will reply that what he did was for the lad’s good, and your own. He may swear that since Richard mentioned politics no more he had taken his conversion for granted.”

My grandfather groaned, and did not speak, and I saw the futility of attempting to bring Grafton to earth for a while yet.



My uncle had recovered his confidence. He had hoped, so he said, that I had become a good loyalist: perchance as I grew older I would see the folly of those who called themselves Patriots. But my grandfather cried out to him not to bother me then. And when at last he was gone, of my own volition I proposed to promise Mr. Carvel that, while he lived, I would take no active part in any troubles that might come. He stopped me with some vehemence.

“I pray God there may be no troubles, lad,” he answered; “but you need give me no promise. I would rather see you in the Whig ranks than a trimmer, for the Carvels have ever been partisans.”

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I tried to express my gratitude. But he sighed and wished me good night, bidding me get some rest.

I had scarce finished my breakfast the next morning when I heard a loud rat-tat-tat upon the street door-surely the footman of some person of consequence. And Scipio was in the act of announcing the names when, greatly to his disgust, the visitors themselves rushed into my bedroom and curtailed the ceremony. They were none other than Dr. Courtenay and my Lord Comyn himself. His Lordship had no sooner seen me than he ran to the bed, grasped both my hands and asked me how I did, declaring he would not have gone to yesterday's hunt had he been permitted to visit me.

"Richard," cried the doctor, "your fame has sprung up like Jonah's gourd. The Gazette is but just distributed. Here's for you! 'Twill set the wags a-going, I'll warrant."

He drew the newspaper from his pocket and began to read, stopping now and anon to laugh:

"Rumour hath it that a Young Gentleman of Quality of this Town, who is possessed of more Valour than Discretion, and whose Skill at Fence and in the Field is beyond his Years, crossed Swords on Wednesday Night with a Young Nobleman from the Thunderer. The Cause of this Deplorable Quarrel, which had its Origin at the Ball, is purported to have been a Young Lady of Wit and Beauty. (& we doubt it not; for, alas! the Sex hath Much to answer for of this Kind.)

"The Gentlemen, with their Seconds, repaired after the Assembly to the Coffee House. 'Tis said upon Authority that H-s L-dsh-p owes his Life to the Noble Spirit of our Young American, who cast down his Blade rather than sheathe it in his Adversary's Body, thereby himself receiving a Grievous, the' happily not Mortal, Wound. Our Young Gentleman is become the Hero of the Town, and the Subject of Prodigious Anxiety of all the Ladies thereof."

"There's for you, my lad!" says he; "Mr. Green has done for you both cleverly."

"Upon my soul," I cried, raising up in bed, "he should be put in the gatehouse for his impudence! My Lord,—"

"Don't 'My Lord' me," says Comyn; "plain 'Jack' will do."

There was no resisting such a man: and I said as much. And took his hand and called him 'Jack,' the doctor posing before the mirror the while, stroking his ruses. "Out upon you both," says he, "for a brace of sentimental fools!"

"Richard," said Comyn, presently, with a roguish glance at the doctor, "there were some reason in our fighting had it been over a favour of Miss Manners. Eh? Come, doctor," he cried, "you will break your neck looking for the reflection of wrinkles. Come, now, we

must have little Finery's letter. I give you my word Chartersea is as ugly as all three heads of Cerberus, and as foul as a ship's barrel of grease. I tell you Miss Dorothy would sooner marry you."

"And she might do worse, my Lord," the doctor flung back, with a strut.

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“Ay, and better. But I promise you Richard and I are not such fools as to think she will marry his Grace. We must have the little coxcomb’s letter.”

“Well, have it you must, I suppose,” returns the doctor. And with that he draws it from his pocket, where he has it buttoned in. Then he took a pinch of Holland and began.

The first two pages had to deal with Miss Dorothy’s triumph, to which her father made full justice. Mr. Manners would have the doctor (and all the province) to know that peers of the realm, soldiers, and statesmen were at her feet. Orders were as plentiful in his drawing-room as the candles. And he had taken a house in Arlington Street, where Horry Walpole lived when not at Strawberry, and their entrance was crowded night and day with the footmen and chairmen of the grand monde. Lord Comyn broke in more than once upon the reading, crying,—“Hear, hear!” and,—“My word, Mr. Manners has not perjured himself thus far. He has not done her justice by half.” And I smiled at the thought that I had aspired to such a beauty!

“‘Entre noes, mon cher Courtenay,’ Mr. Manners writes, ‘entre noes, our Dorothy hath had many offers of great advantage since she hath been here. And but yesterday comes a chariot with a ducal coronet to our door. His Grace of Chartersea, if you please, to request a private talk with me. And I rode with him straightway to his house in Hanover Square.’”

“‘Egad! And would gladly have ridden straightway to Newgate, in a ducal chariot!’ cried his Lordship, in a fit of laughter.

“‘I rode to Hanover Square,’ the doctor continued, ‘where we discussed the matter over a bottle. His Grace’s generosity was such that I could not but cry out at it, for he left me to name any settlement I pleased. He must have Dorothy at any price, said he. And I give you my honour, mon cher Courtenay, that I lost no time in getting back to Arlington Street, and called Dorothy down to tell her.’”

“Now may I be flayed,” said Comyn, “if ever there was such another ass!”

The doctor took more snuff and fell a-laughing.

“But hark to this,” said he, “here’s the cream of it all:

“You will scarce believe me when I say that the baggage was near beside herself with anger at what I had to tell her. ‘Marry that misshapen duke!’ cries she, ‘I would quicker marry Doctor Johnson!’ And truly, I begin to fear she hath formed an affection for some like, foul-lined beggar. That his Grace is misshapen I cannot deny; but I tried reason upon her. ‘Think of the coronet, my dear, and of the ancient name to which it belongs.’ She only stamps her foot and cries out:



“Coronet fiddlesticks! And are you not content with the name you bear, sir?” ‘Our name is good as any in the three kingdoms,’ said I, with truth. ‘Then you would have me, for the sake of the coronet, joined to a wretch who is steeped in debauchery. Yes, debauchery, sir! You might then talk, forsooth, to the macaronies of Maryland, of your daughter the Duchess.’”

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"There's spirit for you, my lad!" Comyn shouted; "I give you Miss Dorothy." And he drained a glass of punch Scipio had brought in, Doctor Courtenay and I joining him with a will.

"I pray you go on, sir," I said to the doctor.

"A pest on your impatience!" replied he; "I begin to think you are in love with her yourself."

"To be sure he is," said Comyn; "he had lost my esteem and he were not."

The doctor gave me an odd look. I was red enough, indeed.

"I could say naught, my dear Courtenay, to induce her to believe that his Grace's indiscretions arose from the wildness of youth. And I pass over the injustice she hath unwittingly done me, whose only efforts are for her bettering. The end of it all was that I must needs post back to the duke, who was stamping with impatience up and down, and drinking Burgundy. I am sure I meant him no offence, but told him in as many words, that my daughter had refused him. And, will you believe me, sir? He took occasion to insult me (I cannot with propriety repeat his speech), and he flung a bottle after me as I passed out the door. Was he not far gone in wine at the time, I assure you I had called him out for it."

"And, gentlemen," said the doctor, when our merriment was somewhat spent, "I'll lay a pipe of the best Madeira, that our little fool never knows the figure he has cut with his Grace."

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH SOME THINGS ARE MADE CLEAR

The Thunderer weighed the next day, Saturday, while I was still upon my back, and Comyn sailed with her. Not, however, before I had seen him again. Our affection was such as comes not often to those who drift together to part. And he left me that sword with the jewelled hilt, that hangs above my study fire, which he had bought in Toledo. He told me that he was heartily sick of the navy; that he had entered only in respect for a wish of his father's, the late Admiral Lord Comyn, and that the Thunderer was to sail for New York, where he looked for a release from his commission, and whence he would return to England. He would carry any messages to Miss Manners that I chose to send. But I could think of none, save to beg him to remind her that she was constantly in my thoughts. He promised me, roguishly enough, that he would have thought of a better than that by the time he sighted Cape Clear. And were I ever to come to London he would put me up at Brooks's Club, and warrant me a better time and more friends than ever had a Caribbee who came home on a visit.



My grandfather kept his word in regard to Mr. Allen, and on Sunday commanded the coach at eight. We drove over bad roads to the church at South River. And he afterwards declined the voluntary aid he hitherto had been used to give to St. Anne's. In the meantime, good Mr. Swain had called again, bringing some jelly and cake of Patty's own making; and a letter writ out of the sincerity of her heart, full of tender concern and of penitence. She would never cease to blame herself for the wrong she now knew she had done me.

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Though still somewhat weak from my wound and confinement, after dinner that Sunday I repaired to Gloucester Street. From the window she saw me coming, and, bare-headed, ran out in the cold to meet me. Her eyes rested first on the linen around my throat, and she seemed all in a fire of anxiety.

"I had thought you would come to-day, when I heard you had been to South River," she said.

I was struck all of a sudden with her looks. Her face was pale, and I saw that she had suffered as much again as I. Troubled, I followed her into the little library. The day was fading fast, and the leaping flames behind the andirons threw fantastic shadows across the beams of the ceiling. We sat together in the deep window.

"And you have forgiven me, Richard?" she asked.

"An hundred times," I replied. "I deserved all I got, and more."

"If I had not wronged and insulted you—"

"You did neither, Patty," I broke in; "I have played a double part for the first and last time in my life, and I have been justly punished for it."

"'Twas I sent you to the Coffee House," she cried, "where you might have been killed. How I despise myself for listening to Mr. Allen's tales!"

"Then it was Mr. Allen!" I exclaimed, fetching a long breath.

"Yes, yes; I will tell you all."

"No," said I, alarmed at her agitation; "another time."

"I must," she answered more calmly; "it has burned me enough. You recall that we were at supper together, with Betty Tayloe and Lord Comyn, and how merry we were, altho' 'twas nothing but 'Dorothy' with you gentlemen. Then you left me. Afterwards, as I was talking with Mr. Singleton, the rector came up. I never have liked the man, Richard, but I little knew his character. He began by twitting me for a Whig, and presently he said: 'But we have gained one convert, Miss Swain, who sees the error of his ways. Scarce a year since young Richard Carvel promised to be one of those with whom his Majesty will have to reckon. And he is now become,' —laughing,—'the King's most loyal and devoted.' I was beside myself. 'That is no subject for jest, Mr. Allen,' I cried; I will never believe it of him! 'Jest!' said he; I give you my word I was never soberer in my life.' Then it all came to me of a sudden that you sat no longer by the hour with my father, as you used, and you denounced the King's measures and ministers no more. My father had spoken of it. 'Tell me why he has changed?' I asked, faltering with doubt of you, which I never before had felt. 'Indeed, I know not,' replied the rector, with his most

cynical smile; unless it is because old Mr. Carvel might disinherit a Whig. But I see you doubt my word, Miss Swain. Here is Mr. Carroll, and you may ask him.' God forgive me, Richard! I stopped Mr. Carroll, who seemed mightily surprised. And he told me yes, that your grandfather had said but a few days before, and with joy, that you were now of his Majesty's party."

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"Alas! I might have foreseen this consequence," I exclaimed. "Nor do I blame you, Patty."

"But my father has explained all," Patty continued, brightening. "His admiration for you is increased tenfold, Richard. Your grandfather told him of the rector's treachery, which he says is sufficient to make him turn Methodist or Lutheran. We went to the curate's service to-day. And —will you hear more, sir? Or do your ears burn? That patriots and loyalists are singing your praises from Town Gate to the dock, and regretting that you did not kill that detestable Captain Collinson—but I have something else, and of more importance, to tell you, Richard," she continued, lowering her voice.

"What Mr. Carroll had told me stunned me like a blow, such had been my faith in you. And when Mr. Allen moved off, I stood talking to Percy Singleton and his Lordship without understanding a word of the conversation. I could scarce have been in my right mind. It was not your going over to the other side that pained me so, for all your people are Tories. But I had rather seen you dead than a pretender and a hypocrite, selling yourself for an inheritance. Then you came. My natural impulse should have been to draw you aside and there accuse you. But this was beyond my strength. And when I saw you go away without a word I knew that I had been unjust. I could have wept before them all. Mr. Carroll went for his coach, and was a full half an hour in getting it. But this is what I would tell you in particular, Richard. I have not spoken of it to a soul, and it troubles me above all else: While Maria was getting my cardinal I heard voices on the other side of the dressing-room door. The supper-room is next, you know. I listened, and recognized the rector's deep tones: 'He has gone to the Coffee House,' he was saying; Collinson declares that his Lordship is our man, if we can but contrive it. He is the best foil in the service, and was taught by—there! I have forgot the name."

"Angelo!" I cried.

"Yes, yes, Angelo it was. How did you know?" she demanded, rising in her excitement.

"Angelo is the great fencing-master of London," I replied.

"When I heard that," she said, "I had no doubt of your innocence. I ran out into the assembly room as I was, in my hood, and tried to find Tom. But he—" She paused, ashamed.

"Yes, I know," I said hurriedly; "you could not find him."

She glanced at me in gratitude.

"How everybody stared at me! But little I cared! 'Twas that gave rise to Mr. Green's report. I thought of Percy Singleton, and stopped him in the midst of a dance to bid him run as fast as his legs would carry him to the Coffee House, and to see that no harm

befell you. 'I shall hold you responsible for Richard,' I whispered. 'You must get him away from Mr. Claude's, or I shall never speak to you again.' He did not wait to ask questions, but went at once, like

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the good fellow he is. Then I rode home with Maria. I would not have Mr. Carroll come with me, though he begged hard. Father was in here, writing his brief. But I was all in pieces, Richard, and so shaken with sobbing that I could tell him no more than that you had gone to the Coffee House, where they meant to draw you into a duel. He took me up to my own room, and I heard him going out to wake Limbo to harness, and at last heard him driving away in our coach. I hope I may never in my life spend such another hour as I passed then."

The light in the sky had gone out. I looked up at the girl before me as she stood gazing into the flame, her features in strong relief, her lips parted, her hair red-gold, and the rounded outlines of her figure softened. I wondered why I had never before known her beauty. Perchance it was because, until that night, I had never seen her heart.

I leaped to my feet and seized her hands. For a second she looked at me, startled. Then she tore them away and ran behind the dipping chair in the corner.

"Richard, Richard!" she exclaimed. "Did Dorothy but know!"

"Dorothy is occupied with titles," I said.

Patty's lip quivered. And I knew, blundering fool that I was, that I had hurt her.

"Oh, you wrong her!" she cried; "believe me when I say that she loves you, and you only, Richard."

"Loves me!" I retorted bitterly,—brutally, I fear. "No. She may have once, long ago. But now her head is turned."

"She loves you now," answered Patty, earnestly; "and I think ever will, if you but deserve her."

And with that she went away, leaving me to stare after her in perplexity and consternation.

CHAPTER XVII

SOUTH RIVER

My grandfather's defection from St. Anne's called forth a deal of comment in Annapolis. His Excellency came to remonstrate, but to no avail, and Mr. Carvel denounced the rector in such terms that the Governor was glad to turn the subject. My Uncle Grafton acted with such quickness and force as would have served to lull the sharpest



suspicions. He forbid the rector his house, attended the curate's service, and took Philip from his care. It was decided that both my cousin and I were to go to King's College after Christmas. Grafton's conduct greatly pleased my grandfather. "He has behaved very loyally in this matter, Richard," he said to me. "I grow to reproach myself more every day for the injustice I once did him. He is heaping coals of fire upon my old head. But, faith! I cannot stomach your Aunt Caroline. You do not seem to like your uncle, lad."

I answered that I did not.

"It was ever the Carvel way not to forget," he went on. "Nevertheless, Grafton hath your welfare at heart, I think. His affection for you as his brother's son is great."

O that I had spoken the words that burned my tongue!

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Christmas fell upon Monday of that year, 1769. There was to be a ball at Upper Marlboro on the Friday before, to which many of us were invited. Though the morning came in with a blinding snowstorm from the north, the first of that winter, about ten of the clock we set out from Annapolis an exceeding merry party, the ladies in four coaches-and-six, the gentlemen and their servants riding at the wheels. We laughed and joked despite the storm, and exchanged signals with the fair ones behind the glasses.

But we had scarce got two miles beyond the town gate when a messenger overtook us with a note for Mr. Carvel, writ upon an odd slip of paper, and with great apparent hurry:

Honoured sir,

"I have but just come to Annapolis from New York, with Instructions to put into your Hands, & no Others, a Message of the greatest Import. Hearing you are but now set out for Upper Marlboro I beg of you to return for half an Hour to the Coffee House. By so doing you will be of service to a Friend, and confer a Favour upon y'r most ob'd't Humble Servant,

"Silas Ridgeway."

Our cavalcade had halted while I read, the ladies letting down the glasses and leaning out in their concern lest some trouble had befallen me or my grandfather. I answered them and bade them ride on, vowing that I would overtake the coaches before they reached the Patuxent. Then I turned Cynthia's head for town, with Hugo at my heels.

Patty, leaning from the window of the last coach, called out to me as I passed. I waved my hand in return, and did not remember until long after the anxiety in her eyes.

As I rode, and I rode hard, I pondered over the words of this letter. I knew not this Mr. Ridgeway from the Lord Mayor of London; but I came to the conclusion before I had reprised the gate that his message was from Captain Daniel. And I greatly feared that some evil had befallen my good friend. So I came to the Coffee House, and throwing my bridle to Hugo, I ran in.

I found Mr. Ridgeway neither in the long room nor in the billiard room nor the bar. Mr. Claude told me that indeed a man had arrived that morning from the North, a spare person with a hooked nose and scant hair, in a brown greatcoat with a torn cape. He had gone forth afoot half an hour since. His messenger, a negro lad whose face I knew, was in the stables with Hugo. He had never seen the stranger till he met him that morning in State House Circle inquiring for Mr. Carvel, and had been given a shilling to gallop after me. Impatient as I was to be gone, I sat me down in the coffee room, thinking every minute the man must return, and strongly apprehensive that Captain

Daniel must be in some grave predicament. That the favour he asked was of such a nature as I, and not my grandfather, could best fulfil.

At length, about a quarter after noon, my man comes in with Mr. Claude close behind him. I liked his looks less than his description, and the moment I clapped eyes on him I knew that Captain Daniel had never chose such a messenger.

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"This is Mr. Richard Carvel," said Mr. Claude.

The fellow made me a low bow, which I scarcely returned.

"I am sure, 'sir," he began in a whining voice, "that I crave your forbearance for this prodigious, stupid mistake I have made."

"Mistake!" I exclaimed hotly; "you mean to say, sir, that you have brought me back for nothing?"

The man's eye shifted, and he made me another bow.

"I scarce know what to say, Mr. Carvel," he answered with much humility; "to speak truth, 'twas zeal to my employers, and methought to you, that caused you to retrace your steps in this pestiferous storm. I travel," he proceeded with some importance, "I travel for Messrs. Rinnell and Runn, Barristers of the town of New York, and carry letters to men of mark all over these middle and southern colonies. And my instructions, sir, were to come to Annapolis with all reasonable speed with this double-sealed enclosure for Mr. Carvel: and to deliver it to him, and him only, the very moment I arrived. As I came through your town I made inquiries, and was told by a black fellow in the Circle that Mr. Carvel was but just left for Upper Marlboro with a cavalcade of four coaches-and-six and some dozen gentlemen with their servants. I am sure my mistake was pardonable, Mr. Carvel," he concluded with a smirk; "this gentleman was plainly of the first quality, as was he to whom I was directed. And as he was about to leave town for I knew not how long, I hope I was in the right in bidding the black ride after him, for I give you my word the business was most pressing for him. I crave your forgiveness, and the pleasure of drinking your honour's health."

I barely heard the fellow through, and was turning on my heel in disgust, when it struck me to ask him what Mr. Carvel he sought, for I feared lest my grandfather had got into some lawsuit.

"And it please your honour, Mr. Grafton Carvel," said he; "your uncle, I understand. Unfortunately he has gone to his estate in Kent County, whither I must now follow him."

I bade Mr. Claude summon my servant, not stopping to question the man further, such was my resentment against him. And in ten minutes we were out of the town again, galloping between the nearly filled tracks of the coaches, now three hours ahead of us. The storm was increasing, and the wind cutting, but I dug into Cynthia so that poor Hugo was put to it to hold the pace, and, tho' he had a pint of rum in him, was near perished with the cold. As my anger cooled somewhat I began to wonder how Mr. Silas Ridgeway, whoever he was, could have been such a simpleton as his story made him out. Indeed, he looked more the rogue than the ass; nor could I conceive how reliable barristers could hire such a one. I wished heartily that I had exhausted him further, and

a suspicion crossed my brain that he might have come to Mr. Allen, who had persuaded him to deliver a letter to Grafton intended for me.

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Some foreboding beset me, and I was once close to a full mind for going back, and slacked Cynthia's pace to a trot. But the thought of the pleasures at Upper Marlboro' and the hope of overtaking the party at Mr. Dorsey's place, over the Patuxent, where they looked to dine, decided me in pushing on. And thus we came to South River, with the snow so thick that we could scarce see ten yards in front of us.

Beyond, the road winds up the hill'around the end of Mr. Wiley's plantation and plunges shortly into the woods, gray and cold indeed to-day. At their skirt a trail branches off which leads to Mr. Whey's warehouses, on the water's edge a mile or so below. And I marked that this path was freshly trodden. I recall a small shock of surprise at this, for the way was used only in the early autumn to connect with some fields beyond the hill. And then I heard a sharp cry from Hugo and pulled Cynthia short. He was some ten paces behind me.

"Marse Dick!" he shouted, the whites of his eyes rolled up. "We'se gwine to be robbed, Marse Dick." And he pointed to the footprints in the snow; "somefin done tole Hugo not come to-day."

"Nonsense!" I cried; "Mr. Wiley is making his lazy beggars cut wood against Christmas."

When in this temper the poor fellow had more fear of me than of aught else, and he closed up to my horse's flank, glancing apprehensively to the right and left, his teeth rattling. We went at a brisk trot. We know not, indeed, how to account for many things in this world, for with each beat of Cynthia's feet I found myself repeating the words South River and Marlboro, and seeking in my mind a connection to something gone before. Then, like a sudden gust of wind, comes to me that strange talk between Grafton and the rector, overheard by old Harvey in the stables at Carvel Hall. And Cynthia's ears were pointing forward.

With a quick impulse I loosed the lower frogs of my coat, for my sword was buckled beneath, and was reaching for one of the brace of pistols in my saddle-bags. I had but released them when Hugo cried out: "Gawd, Marse Dick, run for yo' life!" and I caught a glimpse of him flying down the road. As I turned a shot rang out, Cynthia reared high with a rough brute of a fellow clinging to her bridle. I sent my charge full into his chest, and as he tumbled in the snow I dug my spurs to the rowels.

What happened then is still a blurred picture in my brain. I know that Cynthia was shot from under me before she had taken her leap, and we fell heavily together. And I was scarcely up again and my sword drawn, when the villains were pressing me from all sides. I remember spitting but one, and then I heard a great seafaring oath, the first word out of their mouths, and I was felled from behind with a mighty blow.

THE “BLACK MOLL”

CHAPTER XVIII

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The "Black Moll"

I have no intention, my dears, of dwelling upon that part of my adventures which must be as painful to you as to me, the very recollection of which, after all these years, suffices to cause the blood within me to run cold. In my youth men whose natures shrank not from encounter with their enemies lacked not, I warrant you, a checkered experience. Those of us who are wound the tightest go the farthest and strike the hardest. Nor is it difficult for one, the last of whose life is being recorded, to review the outspread roll of it, and trace the unerring forces which have drawn for themselves.

Some, indeed, traverse this world weighing, before they partake, pleasure and business alike. But I am not sure, my children, that they better themselves; or that God, in His all-wise judgment, prefers them to such as are guided by the divine impulse with which He has endowed them. Far be it from me to advise rashness or imprudence, as such; nor do I believe you will take me so. But I say unto you: do that which is right, and let God, not man, be your interpreter.

My narrative awaits me.

I came to my wits with an immoderate feeling of faintness and sickness, with no more remembrance of things past than has a man bereft of reason. And for some time I swung between sense and oblivion before an overpowering stench forced itself upon my nostrils, accompanied by a creaking, straining sound and sweeping motion. I could see nothing for the pitchy blackness. Then I recalled what had befallen me, and cried aloud to God in my anguish, for I well knew I had been carried aboard ship, and was at sea. I had oftentimes heard of the notorious press-gang which supplied the need of the King's navy, and my first thought was that I had fallen in their clutches. But I wondered that they had dared attack a person of my consequence.

I had no pain. I lay in a bunk that felt gritty and greasy to the touch, and my hair was matted behind by a clot of blood. I had been stripped of my clothes, and put into some coarse and rough material, the colour and condition of which I could not see for want of light. I began to cast about me, to examine the size of the bunk, which I found to be narrow, and plainly at some distance from the deck, for I laid hold upon one of the rough beams above me. By its curvature I knew it to be a knee, and thus I came to the caulked sides of the vessel, and for the first time heard the rattling thud and swish of water on the far side of it. I had no sooner made this discovery, which drew from me an involuntary groan, when a ship's lanthorn was of a sudden thrust over me, and I perceived behind it a head covered with shaggy hair and beard, and beetling brows. Never had I been in such a terrifying presence.

"Damn my blood and bones, life signals at last! Another three bells gone, my silks and laces, and we had given you to the sharks."



The man hung his lanthorn to a hook on the beam, and thrust a case-bottle of rum toward me, at the same time biting off a great quid of tobacco. For all my alarm I saw that his manner was not unkindly, and as I was conscious of a consuming thirst I seized and tipped it eagerly.

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“Tis no fine Madeira, my blood,” said he, “such as I fancy your palate is acquainted with. Yet ’tis as fair a Jamaica as ever Griggs put ashore i’ the dark.”

“Griggs!” I cried, the whole affair coming to me: Griggs, Upper Marlboro’, South River, Grafton and the rector plotting in the stalls, and Mr. Silas Ridgeway the accomplice.

“Ay, Griggs,” replied he; “ye may well repeat it, the-----, I’ll lay a puncheon he’ll be hailing you shortly. Guinea Griggs, Gold-Coast Griggs, Smuggler Griggs, Skull-and-Bones Griggs. Damn his soul and eyes, he hath sent to damnation many a ship’s company.”

He drained what remained of the bottle, took down the lanthorn, and left me sufficiently terrified to reflect upon my situation, which I found desperate enough, my dears. I have no words to describe what I went through in that vile, foul-smelling place. My tears flowed fast when I thought of my grandfather and of the dear friends I had left behind, and of Dorothy, whom I never hoped to see again. And then, perchance ’twas the rum put heart into me, I vowed I would face the matter show this cut-throat of a Griggs a bold front. Had he meant to murder me, I reflected, he had done the business long since. Then I fell asleep.

I awoke, I know not how soon, to discover the same shaggy countenance, and the lanthorn.

“Canst walk, Mechlin?” says he.

“I can try, at least,” I answered.

He seemed pleased at this.

“You have courage a-plenty, and, by G—, you will have need of it all with that of a Griggs!” He gave me his bottle again, and assisted me down, and I found that my legs, save for the rocking of the ship, were steady enough. I followed him out of the hole in which I had lain on to a deck, which, in the half light, I saw covered with slush and filth. It was small, and but dimly illuminated by a hatchway, up the which I pushed after him, and then another. And so we came to the light of day, which near blinded me: so that I was fain to clap my hand to mine eyes, and stood for a space looking about me like a man dazed. The wind, tho’ blowing stiff, was mild, and league after league of the green sea danced and foamed in the morning sunlight, and I perceived that I was on a large schooner under full sail, the crew of which were littered about at different occupations. Some gaming and some drinking, while on the forecastle two men were settling a dispute at fisticuffs. And they gave me no more notice, nor as much, than I had been a baboon thrust among them. From this indifference to a captive I augured no good.

Then my conductor, whom I rightly judged to be the mate of this devil's crew, took me roughly by the shoulder and bade me accompany him to the cabin.

As we drew near the topgallant poop there sounded in my ears a noise like a tempest, which I soon became aware was a man swearing with a prodigious vehemence in a fog-horn of a voice. "Sdeath and wounds! Where is that dog-fish of a Cockle? Damn his entrails, and he is not come soon, I'll mast-head him naked, by the seven holy spritsails!" And much more and worse to the same tune until we passed the door and stood before him, when he let out an oath like the death-cry of a monster.

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He was a short, lean man with a leathery face and long, black ropy hair, and beady black eyes that caught the light like a cat's. His looks, indeed, would have scared a timid person into a fit; but I resolved I would die rather than show the fear with which he inspired me. He was dressed in an old navy uniform with dirty lace. His cabin was bare enough, being scattered about with pistols and muskets and cutlasses, with a ragged pallet in one corner, and he sat behind an oaken table covered with greasy charts and spilled liquor and tobacco.

"So ho, you are risen from the dead, are you, my fine buck? Mr. What-do-they-call-you?" cried the captain, with a word as foul as any he had yet uttered. "By the Lord, you shall pay for running my bosun through!"

"And by the Lord, Captain What's-your-name," I cried back, for the rum I had taken had heated me, "you and your fellow-rascals shall pay in blood for this villanous injury!"

Griggs got to his feet and seized his hanger, his face like livid marble seamed with blue. And from force of habit I made motion for my sword, to make the shameful discovery that I was clothed from head to foot in linsey-woolsey.

"G-d—my soul," he roared, "if I don't slit you like a herring! The devil burn me to a cinder if I don't give your guts to the sharks!" And he made at me in such a fury that I would certainly have been cut to pieces had I not grasped a cutlass and parried his blow, Cockle looking on with his jaw dropped like a peak without haulyards. With a stroke of my weapon I disarmed Captain Griggs, his sword flying through the cabin window. For I made up my mind I would better die fighting than expire at a hideous torture, which I doubted not he would inflict, and so I took up a posture of defence, with one eye on the mate; despite the kind offices of the latter below I knew not whether he were disposed to befriend me before the captain. What was my astonishment, therefore, to behold Griggs's truculent manner change.

"Avast, my man-o-war," he cried; "blood and wounds! I had more than an eye when they brought thee aboard, else I would have killed thee like a sucking-pig under the forecastle, as I have given oath to do. By the Ghost, you are worth seven of that Roger Spratt whom you sent to hell in his boots."

Wherewith Cockle, who for all his terrible appearance stood in a mighty awe of his captain, set up a loud laugh, and vowed that Griggs knew a man when he spared me, and was cursed for his pains.

"So you were contracted to murder me, Captain Griggs?" said I.

"Ay," he replied, a devilish gleam coming into his eye, "but I have now got you and the money to boot. But harkye, I'll stand by my half of the bargain, by G—. If ever you reach Maryland alive, they may hang me to the yardarm of a ship-of-the-line."

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And I live long enough, my dears, I hope some day to write for you the account of all that befell me on this slaver, Black Moll, for so she was called. 'Twould but delay my story now. Suffice it to say that we sailed for a fortnight or so in the West India seas. From some observations that fell from the mouth of Griggs I gathered that he was searching for an island which evaded him; and each day added to his vexation at not finding it. At times he was drunk for forty hours at a stretch, when he would shut himself in his cabin and leave his ship to the care of Cockle, who navigated with the sober portion of the crew. And such a lousy, brawling lot of convicts I had never clapped eyes upon. As for me, I was treated indifferently well, though 'twas in truth punishment enough to live in that filthy ship, to eat their shins of beef and briny pork and wormy biscuit, to wear rough clothes that chafed my skin. I shared Cockle's cabin, in every way as dirty a place as the den I had left, but with the advantage of air, for which I fervently thanked God.

I think the mate had some little friendship for me, though he was too hardened by the life he had led to care a deal what became of me. He encouraged me secretly to continue to beard Griggs as I had begun, saying that it was my sole chance of a whole skin, and vowing that if he had had the courage to pursue the same course his own back had not been checkered like a grating. He told me stories of the captain's cruelty which I dare not repeat for their very horror, and indeed I lacked not for instances to substantiate what he said; men with their backs beaten to a pulp, and others with ears cut off, and mouths slit, and toes missing. So that I lived in hourly fear lest in some drunken fit Griggs might command me to be tortured. But, fortunately, he held small converse with me, and when sober busied himself in trying to find the island and in cursing the fate by which it eluded him.

So I existed, and prayed daily for deliverance. I plied Cockle with questions as to what they purposed doing with me, but he was wont to turn sulky, and would answer me not a word. But once, when he was deeper in his cups than common, he let me know that Griggs was to sell me to a certain planter. You may well believe that this did not serve to liven my spirits.

At length, one morning, Captain Griggs came out of his cabin and climbed upon the poop, calling all hands aft to the quarterdeck. Whereupon he proceeded to make them a speech that for vileness exceeded aught I have ever heard before or since. He finished by reminding them that this was the anniversary of the scuttling of the sloop Jane, which had made them all rich a year before, off the Canaries; the day that he had sent three and twenty men over the plank to hell. Wherefore he decreed a holiday, as the weather was bright and the trades light, and would serve quadruple portions of rum to every man jack aboard; and they set up a cheer that started the Mother Careys astern.

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I have no language to depict the bestiality of that day; and if I had I would think it sin to write of it. The helm was lashed on the port tack, the haulyards set taut, and all hands down to the lad who was the cook's scullion proceeded to get drunk. I took the precaution to have a hanger at my side and to slip one of Cockle's pistols within the band of my breeches. I was in an exquisite' agony of indecision as to what manner to act and how to defend myself from their drunken brutality, for I well knew that if I refused to imbibe with them I should probably be murdered for my abstemiousness; and, if I drank, the stuff was so near to alcohol that I could not hope to keep my senses. While in this predicament I received a polite invitation to partake in the captain's company, which I did not see my way clear to refuse, and repaired to the cabin accordingly.

There I found Griggs and Cockle seated, and a fair-sized barrel of rum between them that the captain had just moved thither. By way of welcome he shot at me a volley of curses and bade me to fill up, and through fear of offending him I took down my first mug with a fair good grace. Then, in his own particular language, he began the account of the capture of the Jane, taking care in the pauses to see that my mug was full. But, as luck would have it, he got no farther than the boarding by the Black Moll's crew, when he fell to squabbling with Cockle as to who had been the first man over the side; and while they were settling this difference I grasped the opportunity to escape.

The maudlin scene that met my eyes on deck defies description; some were fighting, others grinning with a hideous laughter, and still others shouting tavern jokes unspeakable. And suddenly, whilst I was observing these things from a niche behind the cabin door, I heard the captain cry from within, "The ensign, the ensign!" Forgetting his dispute with Cockle, he bumped past me and made his way with some trouble to the poop. I climbed the ladder after him, and to my horror beheld him in a drunken frenzy drag a black flag with a rudely painted skull and cross-bones from the signal-chest, and with uncertain fingers toggle it to the ensign haulyards and hoist to the peak, where it fluttered grimly in the light wind like an evil augur on a fair day. At sight of it the wretches on deck fell to shouting and huzzaing, Griggs standing leering up at it. Then he gravely pulled off his hat and made it a bow, and turned upon me.

"Salute it, ye lubberly! Ye are no first-rate here," he thundered. "Salute the flag!"

Unless fear had kept me sober, 'tis past my understanding why I was not as drunk as he. Be that as it may, I was near as quarrelsome, and would as soon have worshipped the golden calf as saluted that rag. I flung back some reply, and he lunged out and came at me with a spring like a wild beast; and his men below, seeing us fall out, made a rush for the poop with knives and cutlasses drawn. Betwixt them all I should soon have been in slivers had not the main shrouds offered themselves handy. And up them I sprung, the captain cutting at my legs as I left the sheer-pole, and I stopped not until I reached the schooner's cross-trees, where I drew my cutlass. They pranced around the mast and showered me with oaths, for all the world like a lot of howling dogs which had treed a cat.

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I began to feel somewhat easier, and cried aloud that the first of them who came up after me would go down again in two pieces. Despite my warning a brace essayed to climb the ratlines, as pitiable an attempt as ever I witnessed, and fell to the deck again. 'Twas a miracle that they missed falling into the sea. And after a while, becoming convinced that they could not get at me, and being too far gone to shoot with any accuracy, they tumbled off the poop swearing to serve me in a hundred horrible ways when they caught me, and fell again to drinking and quarrelling amongst themselves. I was indeed in an unenviable plight, by no means sure that I would not be slain out of hand when they became sufficiently sober to capture me. As I marked the progress of their damnable orgy I cast about for some plan to take advantage of their condition. I observed that a stupor was already beginning to overcome a few of them. Then suddenly an incident happened to drive all else from my mind.

Nothing less, my dears, than a white speck of sail gleaming on the southern horizon!

For an hour I watched it, now in a shiver of apprehension lest it pass us by, now weeping in an ecstasy of joy over a possible deliverance. But it grew steadily larger, and when about three miles on our port bow I saw that the ship was a brigantine. Though she had long been in sight from our deck, 'twas not until now that she was made out by a man on the forecastle, who set up a cry that brought about him all who could reel thither, Griggs staggering out of his cabin and to the nettings. The sight sobered him somewhat, for he immediately shouted orders to cast loose the guns, himself tearing the breeching from the nine-pounder next him and taking out the tompion. About half the crew were in a liquorish stupor from which the trump itself could scarce have aroused them; the rest responded with savage oaths, swore that they would boil their suppers in the blood of the brigantine's men and give their corpses to the sea. They fell to work on the port battery in so ludicrous a manner that I was fain to laugh despite the gravity of the situation. But when they came to rig the powderhoist and a couple of them descended into the magazine with pipes lighted, I was in imminent expectation of being blown as high as a kite.

So absorbed had I been in these preparations that I neglected to watch the brigantine, which I discovered to be standing on and off in a very undecided manner, as though hesitating to attack. My spirits fell again at this, for with all my inexperience I knew her to be a better sailer than the Black Moll. Her master, as Griggs remarked, "was no d—d slouching lubber, and knew a yardarm from a rattan cane."

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Finally, about six bells of the watch, the stranger wore ship and bore down across our bows, hoisting English colours, at sight of which I could scarce forbear a cheer. At this instant, Captain Griggs woke to the fact that his helm was still lashed, and bestowing a hearty kick on his prostrate quartermaster stuck fast to the pitchy seams of the deck, took the wheel himself, and easing off before the wind to bring the vessels broadside to broadside, commanded that the guns be shooed to the muzzle, an order that was barely executed before the brigantine came within close range. Aboard her was all order and readiness; the men at her guns fuse in hand, an erect and pompous figure of a man, in a cocked hat, on the break of her poop. He raised his hand, two puffs of white smoke darted out, and I heard first the shrieking of shot, the broadside came crashing round us, one tearing through the mainsail below me, another mangling two men in the waist of our schooner, and Griggs gave the order to touch off. But two of his guns answered, one of which had been so gorged with shot that it burst in a hundred pieces and sent the fellow with the swab to perdition, and such a hell of blood and confusion as resulted is indescribable. I saw Griggs in a wild fit of rage force the helm down, the schooner flying into the wind. And by this time, the brigantine having got round and presented her port battery, raked us at a bare hundred yards, and I was the first to guess by the tilting forward of the mast that our hull was hit between wind and water, and was fast settling by the bow.

The schooner was sinking like a gallipot.

That day, with the sea flashing blue and white in the sun, I saw men go to death with a curse upon their lips and a fever in their eyes, with murder and defiance of God's holy will in their hearts. Overtaken in bestiality, like the judgment of Nineveh, five and twenty disappeared from beneath me, and I had scarce the time to throw off my cutlass before I, too, was engulfed. So expired the Black Moll.