THE FLYING YANKEE;

OR,

THE OCEAN OUTCAST.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

THE BRIG, THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE ASTERN, WAS KEEPING UP A RAPID FIRE UPON THE FLYING VESSEL.
A negro servant in livery opened the door, and observing the uniforms of the visitors, said, politely:

"Walk in, gentlemen; the dancing is about to begin."

"We are not here for enjoyment, my man; lead us to a room where we can see Commodore Cutting in private," quickly answered the lieutenant, for such rank the light shining upon his uniform showed him to hold; and in obedience the servant led the way into a small room upon the left of the hotel, and bidding the gentlemen be seated, asked:

"Who am I to tell the commodore wishes to see him?"

"Say simply two officers."

"Yes, sir," and the black disappeared, and in five minutes more the door opened, and there entered a man of massive frame and distinguished bearing, clad in the uniform of a United States naval officer.

"Yes, commodore; the brig has just dropped anchor, after two years' absence from home," said Lieutenant Alden Ainslie, a young man of the lightest form and a keen, daring face, bronzed by long exposure at sea.

"Then why came not Captain Duncan, to report, in person, his arrival?"

"But Commodore Cutting, it is with pain I inform you that Captain Duncan is dead."

"Dead! Horace Duncan dead? When did he die?"

"He met his death ere we sailed from Havana, sir, and his body now lies upon the brig, for I determined to bring it home for burial."

"It was kind of you, sir; but, lieutenant, you speak as if you were in command of the brig; where is her executive officer? Lieutenant Moncrief?"

"I regret to say, sir, that he is aboard in ivons."

"In ivons? Great God! Mr. Ainslie, explain this mystery; Duncan dead, Moncrief in ivons, and you in command of the brig?"

"Bear with me, Commodore Cutting, and I will explain all; and to do so, will say that a coldness existed between Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Moncrief; and from the day of our sailing from Portsmouth."

"The cause of this ill-feeling I am ignorant of, but will state plainly that the captain, upon numerous occasions, was very severe in his manner toward Mr. Moncrief, who was a cup of bitterness to be drank in memo riam of one or more of her brave crew, gone to that haven beyond the blue skies where storms are never known."

"Shorely after sunset the brig-of-war dropped anchor off the town; her sails were quickly furled, and a few moments after a six-oared barge left her side, containing an officer, midshipman and coxswain, passed to the seamen, and rowed rapidly toward the main pier.

"Shove off from the shore, Pierson, and lie on your oars; under no circumstances hold communication with the inhabitants," said the officer in a low tone to the coxswain, as he sprung upon the shore and beckoned the midshipman to follow him.

Silently and rapidly through the dimly-lighted streets of Portsmouth, the officers walked, as if familiar with them, until they came to the main thoroughfare, whereon stood a large brick mansion.

The commodore has company, doubtless, Captain," said the elier officer, as the two entered the gateway and glanced upon the windows, which shed forth a blaze of light, while merry voices came from within.

"Yes, sir; it's a pity to mingle grief with pleasure," answered the young reeveer, as he raised the brass knocker and let it fall with a heavy bang.
"Captain Duncan made some remark to Mr. Moncrief; what it was, I do not know, and the lieutenant answered:

"If you were a brave man, Captain Duncan, you would give me a chance to resent your language and conduct toward me."

"I will do so when and where you please," answered Captain Duncan, and Lieutenant Moncrief replied:

"As we sail to-night, let it be now; you have a friend with you, and, with your permission, Midshipman Bernard will act for me."

"By your permission; so let us take a carriage and drive out of the city's walls, for we wear our swords."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Mr. Moncrief, and half an hour afterward we were in a retired spot near Havana, and I, having arranged the preliminaries with the French officer, Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Moncrief were soon engaged in a fierce encounter."

"By Heaven! this is a strange and sad affair."

"Yes, sir, and one I was powerless to interrupt; but, to continue: Lieutenant Moncrief soon disarmed Captain Duncan and spared his life; but the captain demanding another bout, the lieutenant ran him through, and sensible himself a very faint灰色."

"Terrible, terrible! Our bravest and best officers thus destroying their lives and their reputations; but go on, sir." He immediately returned to the city with the body of the captain, and going aboard ship informed Lieutenant Ainslie of what had happened, and he went to the hotel where Lieutenant Moncrief told him he would await him."

"Yes, commodore," said Lieutenant Ainslie, "I have just sailed, and ordered Captain Duncan's body to be embalmed, for removal home, and found Lieutenant Moncrief awaiting me."

"He did not attempt to escape, then?"

"No, sir; he surrendered himself, and of course I was compelled to put him in irons, to bring him back for trial."

"You did right, sir; it is a sad affair, and will bring great gloom upon our community; but, Mr. Bernard, though I do not censure you as much as I did at first, still you are not exonerated from blame in this matter, and I command you to return to your ship, and there consider yourself a prisoner until further orders."

The young midshipman bowed without a word, and turned to leave the room, while the lieutenant, who was about to follow, was called back by the commodore:

"The news you bring has cast a damper on my evening, Mr. Ainslie. For we were having a little merri-making in my parlors; but I still would be glad of your company."

"Thanks, commodore: I had better return aboard ship, for there are those present who would eagerly ask about the captain and lieutenant."

"True, true; let the matter be kept quiet until the morrow, and then I will come on board. Poor, poor Duncan; poor, poor Moncrief. I feel deeply, alike for the living and the dead," and so saying, the commodore, and commander of the naval forces in and about Portsmouth harbor, warmly shook the hand of the young lieutenant, and after seeing him depart, returned to the gayeties within doors.

CHAPTER II
MONCRIEF MANOR.

In the early part of the present century, there stood upon the shores of a beautiful, forest-encircled bay, a few miles above the city of Portsmouth, a lordly old mansion built of stone, and surrounded by majestic trees and rolling green lawn, that ended only at the waterside to the eastward, and stretched away landward for miles, for it was a grand old place, the home of one of the proudest and wealthiest of New England families.

With every comfort and luxury that riches could purchase, lived in that stately mansion Governor Moncrief and his two sons, Noel and Clarence, strangely alike in appearance, but totally different in character; for Noel, who was the elder, was generous and noble, while Clarence was of a more stouthearted, gentle and manly, and loved his books more than his horse, hounds, and guns.

Left a widower seven years after his marriage, Governor Moncrief had seemed almost brokenhearted at the loss of his wife, and resigning his high official position, had retired to his country seat, to devote himself to the careful training of his sons, and that they might become gentlemen in all cultivation, physically and mentally, he engaged for them instructors in literature, fencing, riding, and filled the library with all kinds of books; the study had much guns, pistols, &c., which was a great favorite with horses, while upon the bay were a yacht, sailboats and row-boats without number.

Thus was nothing neglected in the training of these two youths, and when Noel had reached his sixteenth year, he was an adept in every manly sport, as well as a fair scholar, while Clarence was more studious, yet still a proficient in using sword or pistols, a boat or gunning on the shore.

The result of this training caused Noel to urge his father to get him into the navy as a midshipman, and such a berth the influence of Governor Moncrief easily obtained for him. At seventeen, the eldest brother had entered the service of his country, leaving Clarence at home with his father.

Five years passed away after the departure of Noel ere the young officer again trod his native soil, for the vessel to which he had been ordered upon receiving his appointment, had sailed for the Mediterranean sea, from whence, after a cruise of two years, it had been sent to the West Indies to meet some letters to make war upon the piratical crafts which had of late been attacking American commerce.

As soon as the anchor had been dropped in the Portsmouth harbor, Noel, who was a great favorite with his commander and brother officers, as well as the crew, obtained leave to take a four-oared cutter and row up to the homestead, preferring to go in this way to driving out with a hired team across country.

It was just after dark when the cutter shoved away from the side of the frigate and furnishing the men with a hearty supper, and after a comfortable night's lodging, they set forth with vigor to their cars and soon left the lights of the city far astern, and wended their way rapidly along the daily-wooded thicket, passing over the waters, wending the wanderer home after his years of absence.

"Rest on your oars, men," suddenly ordered Ned; as he was obeyed, and the steady dash of the blades in the water and click, click, in the row locks ceased, there came wafted upon the summer wind over the quiet bay the sound of a bird-like voice singing some beautiful ballad, while also distinctly heard, was the low thumping of a guitar.

Entranced, all listened to the strains of melody floating on the wind, now rising clear and ringing, now falling low and thrilling.

A strange, strange sound; a woman's voice in Moncrief Manor," said Noel, half-aloud, and then having waited some moments after the song ceased, as if longing for its renewal, he quietly ordered:"

"Give way, men."

Once again came the steady stroke and dash, and once again the cutter glided rapidly along, Noel heading her toward a small pier, hidden almost by the darkly-overhanging forest.

"Esther Lawrence," I wish to present these with my unexpected presence, so await here until I return, for you," he said, springing ashore as the boat touched,
"Ay, ay, lieutenant, and a happy welcome to you," answered the coxswain.

"Yes, sir, the same to you from us," said the men.

"Thank you, one and all, my lads, and I assure you a hearty welcome will be given you also, and with a light tread and joyful heart, the young officer walked rapidly over the grounds in the direction of the mansion.

As he placed his foot upon the first step of the broad stairway, there came the more the low notes of a guitar, and again the same rich voice of a woman well forth upon the air, and this time singing a ballad dear to his childhood years, and one which he had heard his mother sing.

"Who can she be?" he murmured, as she ceased, and then he continued:

"Be she old or young, ugly or beautiful, married or single, I love her for the music in her voice; but if I stand here I shall never know," and so saying he walked gently up the stairway, and stood upon the broad piazza that enclosed the mansion.

Through an open window his eyes fell upon the form of a maiden, seated upon a low divan and holding upon her lap a guitar, over the strings of which her fingers were idly straying.

The form was that of a maiden of seventeen, pearl of beauty, with eyes deep down and deep, and a brow arched and well marked; the complexion was pure, white, and beautifully tinted with health, the features perfect in mold, the teeth pearl-white and shining between the ruby lips, which were parted as she warbled a few sweet notes.

The form was graceful, slight and beautiful, though a shadow of the past overcast it, the hair luxuriant in golden masses around her shoulders, for she had unloosened it from the silver comb that lay upon the divan beside her.

Noel stood like one spellbound and gazed upon this vision of beauty before him, and his eyes drank in loveliness he had never before beheld in all his wanderings.

With the impulsiveness of his nature, he sprang forward suddenly before the young girl, and said, gallantly:

"Has the Moncrief Manor become a Paradise, that I can find a dwelling here?"

With a slight start and a quick bound the maiden was upon her feet, her beautiful eyes staring with deprecating wonder; but, as if realizing her position, that she had only been supposed to be here, she turned to him, and said, "Young man, with superb form, flashing, earnest eyes, and darkly-bronzed face, that blended well with the brown mustache and waving hair, she answered, mischievously, while she gazed upon his uniform:

"The Moncrief Manor is a Paradise, sir, one of your cloth must certainly have astray to cross its portal."

"I cry you mercy, sweet angel—"

"My name is Eve, Sir Flatterer."

"Eve, Eve! Then I do not wonder at Adam having been tempted to partake of the forbidden fruit."

"Worse and worse! I declare you are incorrigible; but, joking aside. I am Eve Eldred, a ward of Governor Moncrief, and you are—"

"Who, fair lady—"

"Noel Moncrief."

"True; I have but just returned home, to find a bright change has come over the mansion, for I knew not of your presence here, a presence that I know has brought sunshine upon the old homestead."

"There, no more compliments, Mr. Moncrief; but come in and allow me to do the honors in the absence of your father, whom, I presume, you have not met as you come alone."

"No; he is not here then?"

"No; he left an hour since, as he learned from a servant a man-of-war was coming up the harbor and had expected your vessel home about this time."

"Yes, she has just dropped anchor in front of the town; but Clarence, my brother, where is he?"

"You are indeed like a stranger in a strange land, not to know your brother entered the navy a year since."

"Gone into the navy, Miss Eldred? Why, what could have come over the boy to have thus changed his views?"

"It must have been hearing of your distinguished services and rapid promotion," replied the maiden, archly, and then, she continued quickly:

"I hear wheels upon the drive; your father has returned." A moment after, a tall dignified man stepped from a carriage and quickly ascended the stairway, the next moment to greet with a warm, fatherly welcome, the long-absent son.

"Stand off, Noel, and let me look upon you. Why, you are now a magnificent-looking man, even if your father does say it; and, boy, I am proud of you. Is your gallant services are known to all; but how is it I find you here, when I went to meet you?"

"I came in a cutter from the vessel, sir; and that reminds me, I must look after the comfort of my men, who now await me at the pier."

"Certainly; let Thomas go after them and give them supper and comfortable quarters. Eve, my dear, will you tell Thomas, and also see to preparing for this welcome for your father."

"Certainly, sir; I was just intending to do so, when you arrived," answered the young girl, as she arose and left the room.

"Faster, boy, here is a lucky circumstance do you owe the presence of that lovely creature in the mansion? asked Noel, as she disappeared.

"Ha, my boy, you are also doomed, I fear. She is the daughter of General Eldred, who you know was a distinguished officer in the Revolution, and upon his deathbed two years ago, he made me his guardian, and she is an heiress."

"This is vacation, and she is now at the mansion for the second time; the first time, Clarence had just come home from college, and they became great friends."

"Clarence is in the navy, Miss Eldred tells me."

"Yes; he gave me no rest until I obtained a position for him, and he is now on a foreign cruise; but, really, I believe Eve drove him there, for she does on the service, and spoke so highly of you—"

"Yes, it was about the time you captured that pirate schooner, with accounts of which the papers were full, and, finding that Eve would not love him, poor Clarence left home to endeavor to win her back, or to strive to win her by a gallant naval career; but, here she comes, and I warn you, Noel, not to let her steal your heart, for every man in Portsmouth is in love with her."

"I do not doubt it, sir," answered Noel, as he obeyed the call of Eve, and entered the supper room, where he found a substantial meal awaiting him.

CHAPTER III.

THE FALSE FRIEND

Upon account of their long cruise, the officers of the man-of-war, to which Noel Moncrief was attached, were given by the Secretary of War a leave of absence for three months, and this time the young lieutenant intended passing at home. In the absence of his father and the lovely Eve in whom, at first sight, he had been most deeply interested.

With a character as lovely as her person, Eve Eldred had won the hearts of all who knew her, young or old.

Young, beautiful, an heiress, it was not to be wondered at that Eve soon found herself surrounded by hosts of admirers.

But to all the maiden had turned a deaf ear; al-
though some surmised that Clarence Moncrief would be the fortunate winner of the prize. True, he was the most constant companion, and seemed to idolize her very footprints; but then it was natural for him to be much with her, as, being the adopted daughter of Governor Moncrief, the two were daily in attendance.

Yet Eve Eldred bestowed upon Clarence Moncrief only the affection of a sister, and this the young man soon discovered, to his great mortification, while he liked her terribly. Instead of loosing of his brother Noel, then absent in the service of his country.

At length, finding that his love appeared hopeless, Clarence determined to strive to win the heart of the fair maiden beneath the uniform of a naval officer, and gave his father no rest until he had gained for him a position in the navy, which the governor had obtained through his great influence with government, although the young man was rather too old for the berth of a midshipman.

Delighted at his success, Clarence had left home, and, a year before the return of Noel, he had departed upon a foreign cruise, hoping that upon his return, he would be able to win Eve to love him.

Yet, though Eve had turned a listless ear to the entreaties of her brother, little was evident that the handsome, daring brother, Noel Moncrief, was not indifferent to her, for hardly had the young lieutenant been at home a mere two weeks, than the other, so rapidly does love work havoc in the human heart.

Eve accompanied Noel on horseback-rides, drives, boating excursions, and even went hunting with him sometimes, which she never did before. But her heart seemed to yearn for one so fine, voice, sketches together, for each was a fair amateur artist, and read together.

This was dangerous sport for two young, handsome and generous-hearted people, and the result was just what Governor Moncrief predicted—a love-match that ended in an engagement.

Governor Moncrief willingly gave his consent—the love he might feel would cause poor Clarence upon his return; but then, he felt that Eve loved Noel and not Clarence, and therefore no one was to blame in the matter, excepting the little god Cupid, who, in shooting his arrow, shot it into the heart of Clarence had instilled them with the poison of unrequited affection.

The governor, however, stipulated that the maiden must visit New York, and complete her education, while Noel must once more start forth upon a foreign cruise, and endeavor to win the rank of a captain ere he became engaged.

Beth the lovers agreed to this, for Eve wished to complete her studies, and Noel was also anxious to win promotion, and already knew that he was to sail, ere long, as the executive officer of a brig-of-war, commanded by Horace Duncan, one of his most intimate friends, and he did not doubt, from the service for which the vessel was destined, that he could win by gallant service a step higher up the grade of promotion that would make him a captain.

The brig-of-war was then being fitted out at Portsmouth, and two months before the time for sailing, Captain Moncrief, intent on person the preparing of his vessel for sea.

Horace Duncan was the senior, by ten years, of Noel Moncrief, but when on a foreign station the two had met and become great friends, although as a young lieutenant and the other only a midshipman at that time.

Captain Duncan was an able officer, had distinguished himself on several occasions, and though proud and severe, was nevertheless quite popular with his messmates and crew.

Possessing a striking appearance, and a fair amount of wealth, and family influence to a great extent, he had a brilliant career before him in the service of his country, and his heart throbbed with pride and pleasure when he received orders to take command of the brig-of-war.

Arriving at Portsmouth, he was doubly rejoiced to find that Noel Moncrief was to be second in command, for he well knew what worth of his young friend, while glad to meet again his former companion, Noel had at once invited him to Moncrief Manor, to become his guest until the day set for sailing, saying he would drive or row the city every day, to look after the fitting out of the brig.

Horace Duncan readily accepted the invitation, especially when he was urged by the governor, and at once removed his traps out to the manor.

Then for the first time he saw Eve Eldred, and from the moment of that meeting became her slave, for he madly loved her.

Instead of being purified by his love for the beautiful girl, his heart became callous to the promptings of honor, and when he knew that she loved No 1, from that moment he secretly hated his generous-hearted lieutenant, and determined to tear from him, by fair or foul means, the maiden of his love.

With every noble impulse daecned within him, he set to work secretly to destroy the love of the maiden for Noel, and he was far from evident that the strong, might have succeeded by his many innuendoes cast upon the character of his lieutenant; but, with a woman's penetration and knowledge of human nature, Eve saw through the plot, and at once made known to Noel all that had been said, and the true character of his supposed friend.

Noel had not suspected aught of Horace Duncan, but when his eyes turned to Eve, he became thoroughly aroused and determined to demand an explanation of his unwarrantable conduct in thus abusing the privilege of a guest, to injure him with the woman of his love.

Just as he had come to this determination, Horace Duncan entered the room, holding in his hand an official-looking document, while he said, quickly:

"Noel, I have just received orders from the Secretary of the Navy to sail at once for the Caribbean Sea, where I am to be sent on the service of piracy-hunting, and most fortunate is it that you are to be with me, for your knowledge of those waters is, I believe, considerable."

Noel, Moncrief shook back the words that had risen to his lips, and as the orders to depart would take Captain Duncan and himself away from the society of Eve, he declared not to know the matter to his commander, though he felt that he could never again be friends with him.

"I am glad we have to go, captain, although the orders are sudden; what do you say?"

"To morrow night; and now I must take my leave of your father and Miss Eldred, for my duties aboard ship will keep me busy," and in half an hour more Horace Duncan was driving to Portsmouth; while his heart was filled with bitter hatred toward Noel, and the determination to, in some way, get rid of him during the voyage, that he might return and claim Eve as his bride.

The next morning Noel bade farewell to his father and Eve, and by noon was on board the brig-of-war, which soon after weighed anchor, and stood out of the harbor before a light breeze.

Clinging quietly aloft, while her captain was in the cabin, preparing his last dispatches to send ashore by the pilot, Noel, who was in command of the deck, descried a small fishing skiff standing out from the coast, and heading south, and called out, Horace Duncan.

In the skiff were two persons, one of whom stood in the bow and waved toward the brig, as if to attract the attention of those on board.

"Let her take a look, more yet, for I would speak yonder boat," said Noel, and in a few moments the light skiff was alongside and a rope thrown to the occupants.

"Well, sir, what excuse have you for boarding one of Uncle Sam's sea warriors in this style?"
The Flying Yankee.

Noel, to one of the men who sprung upon the brig’s deck.

"I have an important letter, sir, for Lieutenant Moncrief.

"Ha! I am Noel Moncrief; give it me." The fisherman drew from his pocket a letter, and handing it to Noel, said:

"A young lady came down to the shore on horseback, a short while ago, and gave me the letter, and said she would give me a gold ten if I would sail out and head off the brig, so that you might get it.

"You have done well, my man, and here is a twin gold-piece for you; but hold, there may be an answer."

"No, sir; she went right away, and said there was no answer."

"All right; go to the mansion of Governor Moncrief, seek the young lady, and let her know you delivered the package."

"I will, sir; thank you, lieutenant, for the gold, and a pleasant cruise and safe return to you," answered the fisherman, politely, as he sprung into his skiff, which at once fell astern of the brig.

"If your name is as character as I have heard of you, neglect his duties to read what he believed only a last kind word from Eve, Noel devoted himself wholly to the care of the brig until she was heading on her southward course, when he called me Lieutenant and, the next officer in command, and bade him hold the deck while he went to his own state-room.

There he hastily broke the seal and read in the handwriting of Eve, as follows:

"MONCRIEF MANOR."

"My own Noel,—Believing there would be no further communication with the shore, Captain Horace Duncan had the impudence to send me the note which I inclose for your perusal.

"Determined to prove to you his falsity as a man of honor and a friend, I have ordered my horse, to ride to a point on the coast which I know the brig will pass, to send this to you by some fisherman.

"But, Noel, promise me, I beg of you, that you will only act toward Captain Duncan as his superior rank demands, and in no way allow him to know the knowledge you possess.

"Feeling you will do this, for my sake, and urging you to guard all of your life, believe me, "Ever devotedly yours,"

"EVE ELDRED."

With a dark brow, Noel folded the letter, and then turned to the one inclosed, which was written in the bold hand of Horace Duncan, and read:

"BRIG-OF-WAR, VULTURE, / Portsmouth Harbor."

"MISS EVE ELDRED—LADY—Without any in your life, believe me, / HORACE DUNCAN."

"Horace Duncan, a bitter ending will come to efface me or, for this."

"Sir!"

Noel glanced quickly up, and saw standing before him his commander, his face pale with rage.

"You have no words, Captain Duncan, and you see in my hands your letter to Miss Eldred; henceforth between you and me only shall there be the courtesy due to duty."

"Where did you get that letter?"

"A fisherman brought it to me, an hour since."

"Then you know me, Noel Moncrief?"

"Ay, that I do, Horace; but between us let there be no quarrel, until the end of this cruise, for our services are at present devoted to our country, and as my commander I will obey your every order," and Noel gazed sternly into the face of the man before him.

"So be it."

Thus it was the good brig Vulture started forth upon her voyage, with her captain and lieutenant feeling the bitterness for each other in their hearts, though outwardly there appeared to be a friendly understanding between them.

CHAPTER IV.
The Seaman’s Devotion.

Having made the reader aware of the circumstances of the flags of the brig-of-war Vulture being at anchor for the funeral ceremony, the attention of the reader is called to the character of Captain Ainslie and Midshipman Bernard descended into the hotel to be rowed ashore, was a tall and handsome young man, whose appearance was only remarkable for its peculiarity.

Over six feet in height, awkwardly but powerfully formed, with long, swinging arms and a broad, well-developed breast of chest, the man’s appearance indicated great strength, without any sign of agility, to the casual observer; but, though looking awkward and lumbering, every motion was in quietness, and his dark, restless eyes were ever on the alert.

The face of the individual was even more remarkable, for the head was small, the mouth immense and overhung by an enormous nose, while the eyes were bright, large, and as beautiful in expression as a woman’s.

Who the man was, where he hailed from, or what was his name, none knew, for he had been found aboard the brig when she arrived from Portsmouth, gave no account of himself, and only said, when the paymaster asked his name:

"Put me down as Stranger, please, sir."

And as Stranger he was entered upon the brig’s roll, as a first-class seaman, for such he soon proved himself to be.

Inoffensive, and holding friendly intercourse with none of the crew, the stranger soon began to give him upon his awkward form and ugliness, all of which Stranger bore without a word, until, upon one occasion, a party of his messmates made some slurring remarks upon his parentage, and as quick as a flash of light he sprung into their midst, seized the two insulters in his powerful arms, and hurled them overboard into the sea.

"Man overboard!" rang the cry; the brig was brought up into the wind, a boat was lowered, and the two men were saved and brought aboard, both, however, fearfully frightened.

An investigation of the matter caused Captain Duncan to order Stranger up to the mast, to be punished with the cat—a punishment he received, in spite of the earnest entreaties of Lieutenant Moncrief, and other officers, in his behalf. Stranger took the lash without a murmur, and when released, stepped forward, took the hand of Noel Moncrief, raised it to his lips silently, and walked forward, the unaffected act causing a sneer upon the face of Horace Duncan, while others were deeply touched by this simple mode of thanks, and from that day the strange seaman became the devoted friend of Noel Moncrief.

Thus he was seen quietly by the gangway, watching the departure of Lieutenant Ainslie for the shore, when, as the officer got into the boat, the buckle of his sword-belt broke in twain.

"Here, sir, take this sword-belt into my cabin,
and bring me another you will find lying upon the table.” He pulled out, and springing forward, Stran-
ger eagerly seized the belt and darted into the cabin, his face lit up with a strange light, as if of triumph.

Alas! in an instant only was he gone, when he returned with the belt and handed it to the young lieutenant, who at once gave the order to the men to let fall their oars and give way. The officers’ state-rooms upon the brig, as she sailed up the harbor toward her anchorage, there was one person seated in solemn and gloomy thought, for the return home, after a two years’ cruise, presented to him no bright side, no happy picture.

True, he had won renewed honor, and his name had been mentioned for promotion, but still his mind was clouded with thought, and his face pale and stern as he glanced through the open port, through which was run out a heavy gun.

The state-room was large, and contained, besides the gun, a berth, closet, and chest, while the walls were hung round with uniforms, storm-suits, and hats.

As the officer, for his dress indicated him to be such, moved to get a better view through the port, as he scanned the brig’s rigging, his eye caught a man sitting on the pier, facing the city, the sound of chains broke on the ear, and it could be seen that each ankle was encircled by an iron band chaining him to the floor.

There was Noel Moncrief, who was returning to his home and native land with the blood of his superior officer upon his hands.

“Oh, God!” he murmured, “to thus return, when only a few feet from home so bright, and I looked forward with joy to the moment when the brig would again drop anchor here.”

“Did you call, sir?” suddenly asked a voice, and the form of a marine stood in the doorway.

“Nothing; close the door and keep out,” sternly said Noel.

“I certainly heard you speak,” answered the man, suspiciously.

“All I do to obeyed, sir? I ordered you to your post outside that door.”

“You are not on the quarter-deck now, lieutenant,” said the man, menacingly, as he withdrew, muttering some unkind words to himself against the chained officer.

For some time Noel sat in silence, heard the order from the deck to take in sail and lower the anchors, and shortly afterward saw the head containing Lieutenant Aioslie and Midshipman Ber-
ar! row down toward the city.

“Yes, there they go to make my crime, as it will be called, known to the world; yet I do not blame poor Aioslie, for stern duty alone compels him to act as my foe.”

“Hark! listen to the hum from the city, and mingle with it is the sound of a bass band.”

“Ah! me! I fear there is no hope for me, and that I must die. A terrible, terrible end for one in the flush of youth.”

Suddenly he ceased, and leaning his arms upon the iron gun he rested his head thereon, and in a few moments was fast asleep.

How long he slept, he knew not, but he awoke to find that all was still around him, except the measured tread of the officer of the deck, as he paced to and fro upon his lonely watch.

Suddenly he was startled by a slight sound outside his door, followed by a suppressed breathing, and then a low groan.

“What can it mean? The ship is at rest,” he muttered, but ere he could say more the door was softly opened, and a tall form stepped cautiously within.

“You will have to die, for I heard Lieutenant Aioslie and Mr. Bernard say the commodore said it would go hard with you,” said a voice, in a low whisper.

“Yo, what, you have the keys?”

“Yes, for I knew where the lieutenant kept them, for I saw him place them in a drawer in his cabin, and by good fortune, to-night, he sent me there on an errand, and I secured them.”

“Stranzer, you are a noble fellow, and I will not gain my liberty and leave you to suffer, as you cer-
tainly would have to do.”

“I will go with you, lieutenant, for I would give my life for you,” answered the seaman, honestly.

“Then, what ails you?”

“Anywhere, sir, where you would go. Come, Mr. Moncrief, you are young, handsome and rich; the world is before you, and there are parts of it where you could go and live in happiness, and if you re-
main here you will have to die like a dog, merely be-
cause you punished a man who had made himself your bitterest foe.”

Noel Moncrief was dumb with surprise, to hear a man whom he looked upon as a common seaman, speak thus, and he laid hold of the man’s shoulder, and urged him forward.

“Stranger, you are not what you seem; you have seen better days.”

“Ay, have I, Lieutenant Moncrief, and there will come a day when I will make known to you my life; but time presses and we must fly.”

“No, good Stranger, will not fly; I will remain and stand my trial, and bravely meet my end. I thank you for this noble act upon your part, so re-
turn at once ere you are discovered.”

“It is too late now to retreat.”

“Why, what mean you? Were you seen to come here?”

“No, but you forget the marine.”

“Ha! of what him? how did you pass the man on duty?”

“That sentinel’s off duty forever.”

“What! is he dead?” asked Noel, in a low tone.

“Ay, ay, sir. I slew him, and if you do not fly I will remain and suffer with you.”

Noel Moncrief dropped his head in his hands and pondered a moment, and then said: “Stranger, my good man, you have conquered, for though I would have spared your life, I know I remain both of us must die, and you shall not suf-
fer death for me. Unlock my manacles.”

Gladly the seaman released Noel of his chains, and then, stepping forward, he climbed the state-room door, and drew from beneath his shirt a short rope which he fastened to the gun-carrriage.

Now slip down quickly into the water, lieutenant,” he whispered.

“You go first.”

Without a word the seaman gently and noiselessly lowered himself into the water, and the next mo-
momt was followed by Noel.

“Now let us float with the tide, which is setting in,” whispered Stranger, and releasing their hold upon the rope the two men were borne swiftly away up the harbor, undiscovered by the officer of the deck, as he leaned his head upon a gun-carrriage and gazed toward the sleeping town.

CHAPTER V.

THE DARKEST BLOW OF ALL.

After swimming for half an hour Noel and his pres-ver reached the shore, at a point where there were several fishing drifts anchored, and, a sudden idea flashing across his mind, the young lieutenant said:

“Stranzer, let us take one of these boats, for the wind and tide are both fair, and in a short while I can run up to Moncrief Manor, for I cannot decide upon
my future until I have held conversation with one person.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the seaman, and in a mo-
ment more the two men were in the light skiff; the
mast was stepped, the sail spread, and, with Noel
at the tiller, the little craft sped on before a stiff
breeze past the quiet town.

Mile after mile was passed, when Stranger, who
was in the bow, said, quietly:

"I hear the sound of oars and voices in conver-
sation ahead, sir."

"Doubtless a pleasure-party; there is no danger
of our being recognized, so I'll stand on."

A few minutes more and there came distinctly to
the southward the sound of oars, and a number
of voices mingling in conversation.

"It is as I expected, a pleasure-party. I will luff
up and pass to windward of them, and if they hail
us, say we are fishermen."

Swiftly the light skiff cut through the waves, and
in ten minutes more was within a few yards of the
boat, a large, eight-oared barge, with a canvas
awning and comfortable seats, which Noel at once
recognized as belonging to Moncrief Manor.

"You answer their hail, Stranger, if they should
speak us."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the seaman, and as he
spoke, the sound of a man's voice came across the
water, making some lively remark to some one in
the bow of the barge.

By Heaven! that was the voice of my brother
Clarence. He is the heir, then; and—yes, I bear a
low, musical laugh. Well, it is well for her to laugh
now, for ere long tears may dim her eyes, when she
knows that Horace Duncan has fallen by my
hand, and that I am doomed to die for slaying him.

Poor Eve! Hard indeed did I strive to suffer
everything for your sake, and without a murmur
I put up with his unkindness, until his last insulting
remark before that French captain and Bernard,
fleeing upon your honor, caused me to resent his
evil words.

"Well, the die is cast, and branded with murder,
and dishonored from the navy, I must fly wherever
ever the path of fate may lead me. Stranger!"

"Sir."

"We have passed them without their hailing, and
I now intend to run on and land at my home, where I
shall be welcomed in my honor, to await the
coming of the party from yonder boat, which con-
tains my brother and other friends."

"You remain in the skiff, when I land, and I will
speak to them."

"Yes, sir: will you put on this sword which I
brought with me under my coat? I took it from
your state-room with your brace of pistols, which are
dry, I see, as I rolled them up in their oiled silk
cover."

"Thanks; I will take the sword and one pistol,
while you keep the other."

"I have two pistols and my cutlass, sir."

"Indeed; why you were a floating arsenal. Strange-
ger, and armed as easily as if you carried nothing.

"Yes, sir, I swim well; but I brought arms, lieu-
tenant, thinking we might need them."

"Yes, but here we are at the shore; so take in the sail and I'll run the skiff beneath the shadow of this tree," said Noel, and the next instant the small boat was completely hidden beneath the overlapping branches of a majestic will-
low, and, with light, but the young lieutenant
sprang ashore, buckled on his sword, stuck his pis-
tols in his belt, and, after a word of caution to
Stranger, walked away in the direction of the mansion,
which loomed up grandly a few hundred yards dis-
tance.

Following the gravel path along the water's edge,
Noel passed the small pier, the regular boat-landing
of the shore. Yes, I saw him, half a mile away, pulling steadily
ashore; while, moored against the pier-head, was
a little yacht of fifteen tons, which he had had built
after a model of his own, for both speed and com-
fort, and in which himself and brother had enjoyed
many a cruise together, years before.

"The Dart has been overhauled and refitted, I
see; doubtless Clarence has brought her into service
again," he said, as he stepped on board the little
schooner and walked up and down her deck.

"But yonder comes the barge, and I must hasten," he
said, as he stepped on board the little schooner and
walked up and down her deck.

Soon the pleasure- barge struck the shore, for it
had been delayed by stopping at several mansions
along the river, to land parties who had accepted
the invitation of Clarence Moncrief, to go that way
to the entertainment given by Commodore Cutting,
in Portsmouth.

The oarsmen sprang ashore, and bidding good-
night to Clarence and Eve, started rapidly home-
ward along the shores of the bay, for they were
fishermen living near Moncrief Manor, while the
young man and maiden walked slowly arm-in-arm
toward the mansion.

From his place of concealment Noel watched
their approach, and was about to advance to meet
them, when the words spoken by his brother arrest-
ed his steps.

Clarence was saying:

"Then you still persist in loving Noel?"

"I do, Clarence, and it is ignoble in you to en-
decor to steal my affection from him when he is
absent," answered Eve, truly.

"Curse him! Yes, for your sake I curse my
brother, and would to God he might never re-
turn."

"Clarence, this is unmanly, this is ungenerous,
and I will not listen to you thus speaking of one
who has ever been just and kind toward you."

"Hold, Eve Eldred! Stand here and listen to me," and
seizing her hand, Clarence Moncrief stopped
just in front of the summer-house, and continued in
a low, bitter tone:

"You were mine one—"

"No, sir, I never loved you, except as a brother."

"You were not indifferent to me, and when I knew
you liked and praised Noel, because he was in the
navy, I also entered the service, hoping to gain more
favor in your eyes; but, during my absence, Noel
came, and stole from me your heart, and now, after
three years, I come back to find you my betrothed
wife; no, Eve Eldred, you shall never marry Noel
Moncrief, if I have to slay him with my own hand,
and the Cain-cursed forever. No, I hate him, and you
shall be mine."

"Never, sir!"

Both started at the stern, deep voles, and giving
up saw before them the tall, manly form of Noel
Moncrief, for the moon upon the wane, was just
rising over the forest and fell brightly upon the spot
where they stood.

"Noel! thank God you have come!" and with a
glad cry Eve threw herself into his arms, while
Clarence, in dismay, laid his hand upon his sword-
hilt.

Wait, Eve, and listen to me:

"A few hours ago the Vulture dropped anchor in
Portsmouth harbor, but with no rejoicing did she re-
turn after her long and successful cruise. For
upon her decks lay the dead form of her captain—"

"Killed!"

"Yes, Eve, slain by my hand, in a duel, ere we left
Havana."

"Oh, my God, my poor, poor heart will break!"
cried Eve, while Clarence, whose whole nature seem-
ed to have turned to bitterness, said harshly:

"You are a murderer, then, sir?"

"Listen to me, sir! Eve, this is no time for tears,
for I would have you hear me."

"Yes, Eve, slain by my hand, in a duel, ere we left
Havana."

"Oh, my God, my poor, poor heart will break!"
cried Eve, while Clarence, whose whole nature seem-
ed to have turned to bitterness, said harshly:

"You are a murderer, then, sir?"

"Listen to me, sir! Eve, this is no time for tears,
for I would have you hear me."

"I have been laughed at and disarmed, and giving
him his life; for months I bore with him for your
sweet sake, and had he not at length spoken
evil of you, I would have still suffered on until our
return home: but, he went too far: he fell by my hand, and I was brought home in irons.

On the morning following, I escaped now, it matters not, but I would not have done so, had not a noble man implicated himself in my behalf; and, taking a skiff, I came on here, to make known to you and to my father, all after which I intended to seek a foreign land, where, if you loved me, I wished you to join me.

"Noel, I will follow you to the uttermost ends of the earth!" cried Eve, passionately, as she placed her hands firmly upon his shoulder.

"Never! that woman is mine, and never shall she be the wife of another man!" and drawing his sword Claremont said:

"Brother, put up your weapon, for I would not cross blades with you, even though your words this night tell me that you hate me, and that you no longer love me," said Noel, softly.

"No, Sir Murderer, I hate you, for you have taken from me the love of Eve Eldred!" an i with a bitter cry of hatred, Clarence sprung forward with drawn sword.

"Oh, God, have mercy, but this is terrible!" cried Eve, covering her face with her hands.

"Stand aside, Eve; I will not hurt him," said Noel, and quick as drawing his sword, the two blades crossed, flashes formed for one moment in the moonlight, and the weapon of Clarence was struck from his hand.

With another cry of hatred, he drew a pistol, and fire it full in the face of his brother, but, anticipating it, Noel struck it up with his sword, and the ball passed above his head.

Instantly the hand of Clarence again sought his bow and nocked a pistol; but quickly Noel sprang forward and his sword passed through the body of his brother, who fell with a stifled moan to the ground.

"Eve, I have killed him. Now I care not to live."

"Noel, you must live. Fly, for already I hear the house alarmed. For my sake fly!"

"Wretched!"

"Come with me, sir; quick, or escape will be impossible," said the stern voice of Stranger, who had hastened to the spot when he heard the noise.

"No, good Stranger, save yourself, and here is my belt of gold."

"No, sir, you must come with me," answered the seaman, firmly.

"Yes, for my sake, fly, Noel," and Eve threw her arms about with passionate earnestness.

One close embrace, and then, led by Stranger, Noel strode rapidly away in the direction of the skiff.

"Wonder is a yacht; let us take that, for then we have some chance."

"All right, my man; it belongs to me," and the excitement of escape causing him to, momentarily, forget the duel his hand had wrought, and the misery he had left behind him, Noel sprung on board the little vessel, already mentioned as moored to the pier; the sails were raised with lightning rapidity, the hawser cast loose, and, feeling the wind, the graceful Dart swung clear of the dock, and with her master at the helm stretched across the bay, just as a glance astern showed that an alarmed crowd from the mansion had arrived at the spot, where lay the body of Clarence, with Eve Eldred standing in an agony of grief beside it.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

Commodore Cutting was so much distressed at the sad news brought him by Lieutenant Ainslie for both Captain Duncan and Noel Moncrief he greatly liked another of Claremont's, which was his guests had departed, to go aboard the big and see No. 1, to endeavor to clean from him all particulars in his favor, regarding the duel and its fatal termination.

So deciding, he created the party, who had been his guests, down to the water's edge where the barge awaited them, and refraining, through a kindness of heart, from informing Claremont that his brother had been brought home in irons, he merely asked him to come in with his father, at an early hour the following morning, as he was desirous of seeing them upon a matter of great importance.

Clarence promised. Having bade the commodore good-night, the barge shoved off and the crew, sing- ing a merry song in chorus, headed up the river.

Returning to his mansion he sat down to write some dispatches, and then calling to his servant, ordered his private cutter to await his coming at the foot of the street.

"Yes, I will go on board and learn fully all about this sad affair, so that in the morning I can make known the full particulars to his father and brother. Poor, rash boy! I fear he must die," and so saying, the commodore wrapped himself up in his heavy cloak, and putting on a slouch hat, walked down to the river, where he found the boat in readiness.

Sending himself in the stern-sheets, he said, simply:

"Give way, men; coxswain, steer for the brig-of-war anchored below, and mind you, do not let it be known to the crew who I am."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the coxswain; and with measured stroke the cutter moved away, and in a short while was hailed from the Vulture, with:

"Hoist, ahoy!"

"Dispatches for the commander," answered the commodore.

"Come alongside."

"Ay, ay," and the next instant Commodore Cutting stood on the deck of the Vulture, and was met by Lieutenant Ainslie, who recognized him immediately, conducted him lighted the cabin.

"Ainslie, I could not sleep, so I have come on board to have a talk with you and poor Moncrief,"" am glad to see you, commodore. Be seated, sir, and I will send for him," politely answered the young lieutenant.

"No, I would not be seen by the crew. Go for him, and also bring young Bernard, for if there is anything in favor of the poor fellow, I would find it out."

"I thank you, Commodore Cutting, and I trust sincerely Moncrief may be spared, for a better officer or nobler man never lived," answered the commodore, warmly, as he went to the table drawer to search for the keys that unlocked Noel's manacles.

"Strange, I always keep them here," he muttered, thoughtfully.

"What is it?"

"I cannot find the keys to release the prisoner; they were here just before I went ashore to see you."

"Quick, go to his state-room," said the commodore, excitedly, and leaving the cabin, Alden Ainslie returned the next instant, his face as pale as death, and exclaimed:

"Commodore Cutting, Lieutenant Moncrief has escaped."

"Gone? Impossible!" said the commodore, springing to his feet.

"It is true, sir, and would that were all; but the guard who was over him dies lies dead by the door, having been stabbed to the heart."

"Great heavens! Lieutenant Ainslie, this must be looked to. Come, let us to the deck; have the men called to quarters, and if possible the fugitive must be overhauled, for it is a lasting disgrace to a man-of-war to be thus beheaded."

Quickly ascending to the deck, accompanied by the commodore, Lieutenant Ainslie gave orders to call the men to quarters, and then the two descended to the gun-deck, where the form of the dead marine was found, and the sword hanging from the over port proved the manner in which the prisoner had escaped.

"He has been aided in this; let us to the deck," and once more ascending the quarter-deck, the commodore called out:
"Who is officer of the deck?"

"I am, commodore; Mr. Bennett took my place when I went into the cabin with you," answered Lieutenant Ainslie.

"Mr. Bennett, have you seen aught going on that is a clew to this escape of the prisoner?"

"No, commodore; yonder schooner-yacht passed us when we were coming in, giving us a wide berth," answered the officer, pointing as he spoke toward a white sail that was flying rapidly seaward.

The eyes of all were turned toward the flying craft as a loud voice hailed from an approaching skiff that came down the river:

"Ho, the brig-of-war!"

"Ahoy! what do you wish?" answered Lieutenant Ainslie.

"Will you bring yonder schooner to? for those now on board of her slew Mr. Moncrief, a short while since," came the answer.

"Ha! here is a clew! Mr. Ainslie, train a gun on the schooner, and Mr. Bennett, let fall the sails, for I will give chase if we fail to bring the yacht to," said the commodore, and he then called to the men to come alongside.

"Well, sir, now give us all the knowledge you have about this matter," said Commodore Cutting, sternly, as the occupants of the skiff, two in number, ascended the pier.

"Well, sir, we be fishermen, and was in the barge that brought Mr. Moncrief and his party down to the merrymaking at your house to-night, and when we got to the mansion again we started to our homes, and had gone but a little way when we heard a pistol-shot, so we ran back to where we had left Master Clarence and Miss Eve, and we saw the yacht ranging away from the pier, and on her deck was a man, one in an officer's uniform, and the other a great big fellow, looking like a seaman.

Well, sir, we ran up to where the servants was crowding in a knot, having come down from the mansion, and we saw Master Clarence lying on the ground with a sword-wound in his side, and Miss Eve was fainted and held up by the governor—"

"Then, slip the cable and give chase, and with a will. Do you hear, men? Lively to your work!" cried Commodore Cutting, and he again turned to the seaman and said sternly: "Go on, sir, with your story."

"Yes, sir; well you see, Jake, here, and me knew who it was—"

"Who was it?"

"I mean we knew who it was had done the deed was them as was running away in the yacht, so we went down to the shore and there we found the skiff alongside, which we knew belonged to some fishermen here in the town, so we jumped into it and gave chase after the schooner, sir, and that's all we know."

"I thank you, my men; now go back to your skiff, and if we overhaul the murderer, you shall not be forgiven for your promptness; who did you say was absent from the vessel, Mr. Bennett?"

"A seaman who sails only to the name of Stranger; he has left the brig since dark."

"Then he it was who aided Lieutenant Moncrief in his escape; and, Ainslie, said as it appears, I fear we shall find that another crime has been perpetrated by Noel, for did you observe, the fishermen returned, to whom who fled in the yacht were an officer and a seaman, as the moonlight plainly showed?"

"Yes, sir, I noted it."

"Then how you make out of it all?"

"I know not what to say; there she swings round and feels the wind. Clear those bow-guns there, and as soon as you can get range, send a ball after yonder schooner;"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Commodore Cutting, your barge is still along-side," said a reeler, coming aft, and politely saluting his superior.

"True, I had forgotten," and stepping to the lee of the brig, he said:

"Coxsawm, cast off and row back; let the ladies at home know where I am, and say I expect to return soon."

"Ay, ay, sir," and the cutter dropped rapidly astern, just as a brilliant flash illuminated the bows of the brig, the deep voice of a gun roared angrily forth upon the still night air, and reverberated through the quiet streets of the town.

"Stranger, the brig is in full chase; doubtless the skiff we saw astern of us has let them know who we are," said Noel Moncrief, calmly, as he stood at the helm of the little yacht, and held her on her course with steady hand.

"Yes, sir, she is in earnest, for yonder comes a gun; but it was aimed wildly," answered the seaman, as the shot flew far to windward.

"They'll improve by practice, and the moonlight is in their favor."

"No, lieutenant; if the gunners of those bow-guns know it is you that stands on this side of the deck, take my word for it, the shots will all fly wild, for there are few men in yonder brig but would risk their lives to save you."

"Still we must endeavor all in our power to escape; with our present breeze I believe she will bear her topsails and flying-jib."

"Ay, ay, sir," and Stranger sprung forward, and in a few moments had set the extra canvas.

The yacht was all astern, astern, and astern, the three-quarters of a mile astern, was keeping up a rapid fire upon the flying vessel, but with no other effect than to send the balls over and around her, occasionally striking near enough to throw a shower of spray upon the decks.

As Noel watched the brig, however, he saw that, though the yacht was a fast sailer, she was being steadily overhauled by her pursuer who was now covered with canvas from her topmasts to her decks, and he felt assured that, as soon as his little craft had to stagger through the waves of the ocean, she would soon be taken.

Still his nerve did not fail, nor was there a tremor of his hand upon the tiller, as he urged his little vessel on, his eyes glancing ahead and then astern.

The yacht had now reached a part of the harbor where the channel runs to the east side of Great Island, taking a circuitous route for more than a mile, and Noel was about to follow its devious course, when a shot from the brig carried away the schooner's fore-topmast, the shock causing her to shiver from stem to stern."

"That is bad for us, Stranger," said the young officer, coolly, and then he quickly added: "By Heaven, I'll risk it. Stand ready to ease off everything!" and putting the helm hard down, Noel sprung forward to let fly the main-sheet, while Stranger did the same for the foresail and jibs.

In an instant the little schooner came about, and, close-hauled, stood back in the direction of the brig-of-war.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORM CHASE.

WONDERING at the strange maneuver of the lieutenant, Stranger was however silent, and stood ready to obey the slightest order, for he had implicit confidence in Noel's skill and courage.

On derided the schooner, until she came Once more to the head of Great Island, and scarcely half a mile behind her, the brig, which had crossed the brig, upon noticing her put about, believing those on board of her had seen their 'inability to escape, and were coming back to the scene."

Commodore Cutting had just given the order to Lieutenant Ainslie to cut the brig, and her bows
were sweeping gracefully around in obedience to her helm, when suddenly, there was a surprised cry forward, and all eyes were at once turned again upon the yacht.

Having discovered, that, if he kept the ship channel, to the northward of Great Island, his craft would soon be overhauled, or sunk by the fireboat, Noel had at once determined, as his fore-topmast was shot away, to put back and attempt to run the south passage between the main, upon which stood Portsmouth, and the island before referred to.

For this reason he had put back to gain the head of Great Island, although he well knew the channel through which he would have to pass, was, in some places, but three feet in depth.

But the yacht drew little over two feet of water, and he determined to risk it, and with such success was his attempt carried out, that, as he anticipated, the brig was brought up into the wind, believing him on his way back to surrender.

The exclamation of surprise then on the Vulture, arose from seeing the schooner round the head of Great Island, ease off the sheets free, and dart away before the wind, her sails spread out wing-and-wing.

The brig having come to, it was some moments before she could be got through the way to their own, so that when she reached the head of Great Island the schooner was half-way through the shallow and intricate channel, and passing Pest Island.

"There comes the last gun she can fire at us, for some time," Stranger, said Noel, quietly, as one of the broadside guns sent a shot over the schooner, just as the brig continued on in the channel, and kept on, staggering over and through the wild waters, which were rendered blacker by the mass of clouds hovering low over the sea, and from which broke a mournful roar of thunder.

"Ha! there comes the first flash of lightning. Now keep a bright watch for the next, and we'll see what has become of the brig," said Noel, whose face was pale and drawn, and for he could not but feel that it was God's anger upon him for the deed his hand had wrought, and even the stoical seaman felt awed by the mighty power of an avenging Almighty.

Suddenly the whole sea was a broad flame of light; a vivid, forked spear of lightning pierced the dark masses of storm-clouds, darted with angry zig-zag, fiery spindles from the heavens, and amid a crash of thunder that shook the very waters, descended oceanward until it struck the tall, tapering jibs of the brig-of-war, two miles to windward of the schooner.

"God in heaven! but this is awful! Oh, what misery and despair have I brought upon my ill-fated companions!" cried Noel, momentarily releasing his hold upon the tiller.

"Yes, lieutenant, I hope they will be saved, for there are many brave and noble men on yonder vessel; but we have no need to dread them now, so had we not better lay to, for the schooner is nearly drowned forward, and I fear she may run under, as the tide is increasing."

"You are right, my good friend. Here, give me the helm, and stand ready, for I'll take advantage of the next favorable wave to bring her up."

A moment more and the gallant little vessel had brought her bows into the wind, and lay upon the storm-swept waves in comparative safety, while the two men, who so bravely guided her destiny, turned their eyes fixedly upon the brig, which was now almost a mass of flames above decks.

"See! see! there shake her masts—they are gone! Look! now they cut the stays!" cried Noel, and with a loud crack and hissing sound, heard even on the schooner, the entire top-bencher of the gallant
brig-of-war went over the side into the sea, leaving the waters once more in impenetrable gloom.

“Behold! there goes a gun; what can they have seen us, and, even a wreck as they are, be firing at us? Is Tamás hat as deep as that?”

“No, sir; there goes another flash; they are firing minute guns of distress, to call for aid from the town.”

“Pray, you are right, and I hope it will be understood by the two cruisers I saw in the harbor.”

“I hope so; but now, unless they are sinking, they have little to fear, for the hull is good and will ride out the storm, when they can rig jury-masts and get back to Portsmouth.”

“Yes; but, Stranzer, they come down upon us rapidly; what say you shall we get sail on the schooner and again stand out of the brig’s way?”

“No, sir; for the canvas would be blown to ribbons in a second. She will pass near, but not over us, and perhaps not so near us as we lay low in the water,” answered the seaman.

“You are right; she will pass to leeward of us, and I will hail and see if they need aid; for, if my life must endanger it, I will not see my shipmates perish while I have a sound deck beneath my feet.”

“Mr. Moncrief, your heart is in the right place, sir; I will stand ready to obey your order, even if it involves them, and I shall treat them as I would treat my own kin in the hangman’s noose.” answered the brave sailor with firmness.

The brig could now be distinguished by the flash of her “eyes,” but a few cables’ length distant, rolling and pitching heavily in the sea, and coming down toward the schooner only a short distance to leeward.

Getting clear by the mainstays, Noel awaited until the wreck came near; and just as the roar of another gun died away, hailed in a loud, ringing voice:

“Hail! the brig, ahoy!”

No answer came for a moment, and then in the voice of Lieutenant Ainslie was the reply:

“Ahoi! who hailes, and whereaway?”

“Call to chase, off your windward bow. Do you wish aid?”

A murmur of voices could be heard for an instant, and then Lieutenant Ainslie cried:

“We were struck by lightning; our masts are cut away. We will send up a signal as soon as we can.”

“My vessel is large enough to hold your crew; I’ll hang off your quarter in case of need.”

A moment there was silence, and as the brig was driven by Mr. Noel, she said:

“She must bear sail, Stranger; raise the foremost staysail!”

With great difficulty the order was executed; and in a few moments the schooner was again driving before the gale, but with terrible risk, and soon overhauled the brig, when Noel again hailed:

“I will hang near you, in case of need.”

“Who is that hailes?” sternly cried the stentorian voice of Commodore Cutting.

“Mr. Moncrief,” boldly answered the young officer, and his words brought a ringing cheer from the crew of the brig.

“Aha! No, Mr. Moncrief, we are in no immediate danger; our pumps will keep us afloat, and we can soon rig jury-masts.”

“Sir,” sir, if we could not take you by fair means we will take you by force. Our course is your true man, and if life is dear to you, keep clear of the United States.”

A perfect yell of joy came from the seamen of the brig, when prepared with Noel, and admired his courage and the noble offer he had but just made to serve them, and again the commodore cried:

“Mr. Moncrief, it was noble of you to desire to serve us, and we thank you for it.”

Again the clear and manly tones of Noel Moncrief were heard, and all remained silent to hear him, for the schooner was forging ahead, as he hailed:

“Commodore Cutting, I thank you for your kindness. One and all, shipmates, farewell, to my business called him to Havana or Matanzas.”

Upon the deck of the carrera were visible nine persons, one of whom was a tall, stately man, dressed in white duck, and who appeared to be the commander, for he held the helm, and every now and then gave some orders to four negroes forward, who formed the crew.

The helmsman was not a negro, though his face was very dark; but in his features and dark flashing eyes could be traced the blood of a descendant of that ancient tribe of Indians, the Ecuurians, who were the original possessors of the island which it has cost Spain so many human lives to hold.

Amidships stood two other persons, a young man and a young girl, both showing in their faces the admixture of the whites with the African race, and that appearance indicative that they held the responsible positions of sede and femme de cham to an old gentleman and a maiden who were seated afloat, upon a low settee, apparently enjoying the beauty of the evening sky over the coast, for the carrera was hardly a mile from the shore.

The old gentleman referred to was a person of striking appearance, for his face was deeply bronzed, his eyes intense black and brilliant, while his mustache and curling hair were snow-white.

Dressed in a suit of white linen, with a broad sombrero upon his head, Don Octavio Guido looked exactly what he was, a wealthy planter of Cuba.

The maiden by his side, the Donna Violeta, was one of those dark types of beautiful women, peculiarly Spanish in face and form.

Her every motion was graceful, and her figure slight, molded with marvelous symmetry, and rather above the prescribed height for a perfect form, but still it appeared faultless in the close-fitting bodice and skirt of dark-gray cashemere.

Upon her head, besides the rich dark veil that dropped upon her shapely shoulders, Senorita Violeta wore a broad sun-hat, that cast in shadow and half hid the braids of black hair, drawn from the forehead and fastened in a circling mass with a gold comb.

So intently were all on board the craft engaged in watching the landscape panorama, as they passed along, that they failed to observe a drover, a kind of freight vessel used to carry coffee and sugar from the plantations to the city, that had suddenly come out of a lagoon and was standing boldly down upon them.

The drover had two stump masts, upon which were hoisted by pulleys two long yards with large
triangular sails, which instead of reefing in a blow, could be lowered in an instant into the hold of the lugger, which was open, except a canvas covering strong shock, and supported by a spar acting as a cross beam.

But one man was visible upon the lugger, and he was at the helm, apparently endeavoring all he could to take advantage of the light wind to eat up to windward of the carrera.

For a while he was successful in his maneuver, and had nearly gained the wind of the smaller craft, when the lookout on the carrera’s board, who had seen the lugger falling upon it, and a stern order from his lips brought all on board to their feet.

"What is it, Lalul?" asked Don Octavio, quickly.

The Indian answered in Spanish.

"Yonder drógher means no good, coming down on us that way; trim the sails closer, and I’ll edge more into the wind," and the tones of his voice were strangely soft and musical.

The order was obeyed, and for a moment all

watched anxiously to see the result, for piratical craft were frequent in those waters at the time this story is laid, and especially were the lagoon bucaneers dreaded as a most cruel and ferocious set.

"Nombre de Dios, but she gains rapidly upon us, Lalul! Suppose we square away and run before the wind," said Don Octavio, looking forward of the carrera’s bow.

"I’ll try it, senor. Let go the halyards fore and aft!" and away the carrera sped before the wind, to have her example followed the moment after by the drógher.

"This will never do, Lalul; for see, the lugger is now on her best sailing point.

The Indian helmsman glanced quickly over his carrera, then silently for a while at the lugger, and at once gave the orders to the negro crew to trim in the sheets, while he put her away upon her former course, for with the wind on her quarter the drógher had to change, and it was evident she was not gaining as rapidly before they put away as after.

"She still overhauls us, senor; but not as rapidly as before.

No Lalul, what do you believe that drógher to be?" and Don Octavio glanced anxiously toward his beautiful daughter, who, with pale face, was watching the approach of the strange vessel.

"Sera, I think the lugger is a pirate," answered the Indian, in a low tone.

"My God! I feared so, Lalul, we must not be taken, and the Cuban again glanced toward Violette.

"No, senor, it is death anyway; so let us die with arms in our hands."

"Well said—Ha! yonder comes another sall!" and the Cuban pointed some two miles ahead, to where a small rakish-looking schooner was just rounding a point of land.

The helmsman seized a glass and gazed intently at the strange sail for a moment, and then said:

"She does not belong to these waters, but looks like an American-built vessel. If she were not so small I would believe her to be a buccaneer, also."

"Mary, mother of God, grant it be a friend! Here, one of you holds lower our flag to half-mast and let him see we need his succor!" cried the Cuban.

The flag of Spain soon floated at half-mast, and all hands were eagerly turned toward the schooner, to denote the slightest change in her course.

"Scon it came; her bow swung round quickly, and, with the wind very nearly astern, s-s-d- she flew flyingly." the carrera’s bow.

The drógher at once presented a scene of action, for a dozen dark forms were discovered moving upon her decks, and quickly four long and heavy sweeps were put in place, and the man overhauled the carrera the schooner got to her.

With intense excitement all on board the carrera watched the flight of their own vessel, which, pressed to her utmost speed, was only making about five knots, and then turned their eyes upon the rapid approach of the lugger, still nearly a mile astern, but coming with increased speed, while as the carrera glanced ahead, toward the schooner, which, with a wall of foam about her bows, was rushing toward them.

"Senor, that drógher is one of the fastest of her class; but, swift as she is now, surely a man can make her better sail," and Lalul handed the glass to Don Octavio, who, placing it to his eye, turned it toward the little vessel that had so nobly answered their sign of distress.

"Lalul, she carries but one gun, that I can see—a small brass piece upon her forecastle, and I can only observe some dozen men upon her deck.

"Enough with our aid, to beat off fifty of the drógher’s crew. Shall I luff closer, so as to speak him?"

"Yes, Lalul. Violeta, see how swiftly yonder schooner comes on—oh, see, yonder goes her flag—she is an American!"

"Yes, father; I have watched her rapid approach, and, though most anxious, have not failed to note her grace and speed. See, the schooner is altering her course and will come over to us."

A few moments more and with her sharp prow cutting the water and dashing showers of spray upon either side, the schooner had come within a cable’s length, and Don Octavio glanced to pass within a few fathoms of Don Guido’s craft.

Suddenly a manly form sprung into the schooner’s main-rigging, and a clear voice hailed:

"Ho, the carrera!"

"Ahoy the schooner!" answered Lalul.

"Is yonder drógher in chase of you?"

"Ay, it is a lagoon pirate."

"All right. I hope you are strong enough to board him, but will give him a lesson. In the mean time, stand on as you are, and I will protect you all in my power.

"I thank you, sir," and ere the don could say more, the schooner had passed by and was rushing on toward the drógher.

"A daring fellow that, and indeed a generous one to throw himself between us and danger; but it is just like those Americans, reckless and noble-hearted to a fault," said the don, with enthusiasm.

"The drógher, ahoy! Put back or I’ll fire into you!" came across the water, in distinct Spanish.

"No, senor, our vessel is the only answer, and the next instant there came a puff of smoke from the bows of the schooner, and the rear of a six-pounder floated over the waters, followed by a crash of timbers and the groans of pain and fury coming from on board the drógher.

"Ha! ha! the buccaneer has met his match, if it is only a little schooner, one-fourth his size. See, see! there goes another shot, and while the drógher comes up into the wind the schooner is changing her course and wearing round," exclaimed Don Octavio, who, with Violeta. Lalul and the others, earnestly watched the movements of the trave little vessel.

After firing a second gun, which did considerable damage, as had the first shot, on board the carrera, the brave little schooner wore round, hailed her sheets inboard and stood away in the wake of the carrera.

Rapidly the little schooner overhauled the carrera, and keeping in her wake and a point closer to windward, threatened to shave her. But the passed by, and the Cuban planter and Lalul watched his strange movements, for they knew not yet what was the intention of the American.

Nearer and nearer the schooner approached, and, just as her sharp bowprit lowered over the stern of the carrera, she fell off quickly, and, passing to leeward, her commander cried:

"Spring aboard there, men, and hold the two vessels firm together," the next instant a young man, clad in a light, blue flannel suit and with a naval cap, sprung upon the carrera’s deck.

It was Néel Moncey.
CHAPTER IX.

THE LAGOON PIRATES.

"Lash firm, men! Keep her off a little, helmsman, so that the two will sail more evenly," cried Jolly Jack, and then, raising his cap, politely, he turned toward Don Octavio, who, with Lalul and Violeta, had greatly admired the skilful manner in which the young officer had laid his vessel along the wind.

"Pardon me, senor, and you, senorita, for boarding you in such an unceremonious manner, but youder drogher is only temporarily crippled, and will soon follow, so I offer you the service of my schooner, captain, gratis.

"I thank you, Senor Americano, from my heart; I thank you for my daughter and myself, for even now would we have been in his power had it not been for your timely and advantaging aid.

"Senor, this is no time for thanks, but for action; I have simply one six-pounder brass gun, and I observed the crew of the drogher engaged in getting a cannon out of the hold to mount upon her forecastle, and again give chase; so I urge you to at once go aboard the schooner.

"And what will become of my carrera?

"If you can abandon my vessel, for I have room for your crew as well as yourselves, and if you do not care to have your craft fall into the hands of the buccaneers, set her on fire.

"Resist, not for the loss of my vessel, but for the trouble we will give you.

"Do not mention it, sir. I am bound to Havana, and will take you there.

"It is gladly I accept your kind offer. For I see the drogher is getting under way again;" and turning to his helmsman he bade him get the baggage quickly on board the schooner.

In a very short while the crew of the carrera, aided by a dozen seamen from the schooner, had transferred the baggage and a few other things from the cabin and hold of the Cuban craft to the American; and Noel, with a polite salute to Violeta, offered his hand and conducted her into his own sumptuously-furnished saloon, saying:

"Here, lady, I trust you will make yourself as much at home as though this were your own vessel; your majesty shall join you, and your father will be near you.

"Senor Americano, I owe you more than my life; but not now can I thank you, as your vessel needs your services; for I feel that even now we are in danger.

"True, lady; to say otherwise would be false; but I have faith in my little schooner's speed, and we may be able to escape as the gun is mounted upon the drogher. If I can in any way serve you, command me.

So saying, Noel left the cabin, and ascending to the deck found all in readiness to cast off.

"Have you set the carrera on fire?"

"Yes, senor; it is burning in the hold, and the flames will soon break forth," answered Lalul, sadly, as it is sorrowful to destroy his vessels.

"Then cut loose the lashings. Quick about it, men! Steady, helmsman; there, she forces ahead," and the next instant the schooner moved forward; and free from the other craft bent bravely to the breeze, which was now blowing quite brisk.

"Stranger, help the crew of the Cuban craft to store away their luggage, and let the baggage of the don and senorita be taken into the cabin," and walking aft, Noel relieved the seaman at the helm.

"Ay, ay, sir, and what about the crew of the carrera?"

"We would be glad to serve if you would assign us to duty, senor," said Lalul, politely.

"All right, my men. You, senor, can divide the watches between my mate and myself, for I see you are a thorough seaman.

"Thanks, senor, and I will now relieve you of the helm," and Lalul stepped forward and Noel relinquished his place to him, while he walked toward the don and Violeta, who just then came up from the cabin.

"The drogher is in full chase, I see, senor."

"Yes, sir, and the pirates are hastening to mount their gun, which I believe is a long eighteen, as well as I can make out with my glass; but, we have a mile start now, and, although as the deck is clear of luggages, I intend to crowd on all the sail the schooner will carry," answered Noel, pleasantly, and turning suddenly he beheld Violeta. Instead of looking upon the burning carrera, which was now half a mile astern, she was gazing intently into his face.

Their eyes met, and the maiden hid her earnest gaze beneath the heavily-fringed lids, while her lips were flushed brightly, but over the features of Noel Moncrieff stole a look of inexpressible sadness, for the beautiful maiden brought vividly to his mind one dear to him, and whom his own act had lost to him forever.

"Senor, we are gaining upon the drogher," said Lalul, turning to the young American, and also discovering it, the Cuban planter remarked:

"I have great faith in your little craft, captain—captain. But I have not heard your name, senor."

"Can I see you a moment, sir?" suddenly asked Stranger, with a look of anxiety upon his face.

"In one moment, good Stranger—my name, don, is—"

"It is most urgent, sir," said Stranger, again intruding, and seeing the expression upon his face Noel stepped quickly forward, and the seaman said, in a low tone:

"Pardon me for seeming rudeness, sir, but I feared you were going to give your own name to the don.

"In truth was I, Stranger."

"Well, sir, we are bound to Havana, if we escape the buccaneer, and though the schooner is so altered as not to be recognized, still it would destroy all to go into your craft under your own name, as there may be some American vessel-of-war there."

"Ever thoughtful, my good Stranger—"

"Mr. Moncrieff, I am no longer a stranger, to you now, so I'll tell you frankly my name. It is Wesley North."

"Two more, such as Easter Southey, for instance, and you would have gotten around the compass, I believe. I remember I'll remember this is Wesley hereafter, and mine is—is—a strange feeling urges me to it, and I will do it—my name is—Clarence Noel."

The seaman started as he heard the name, but only rejoined:

"You are a planter of wealth, living on the Mississippi river, and being fond of the sea this is your pleasure yacht."

"The very thing, West; now I will return to the don, and then he continued in a loud tone:

"Mr. West, run up the flying-jib, and set the top-sails, for we must get away from that fellow."

"Ay, ay, sir!" and to the call of the seaman, now known as West, the crew of the carrera as well as the men belonging to the schooner, sprang nimbly to obey the order.

Joining the Cubans again, the don remarked:

"I was about to say, captain, as your mate called you away, that I am Don Octavio Guido, a planter of Cuba, and this is my daughter, the Senorita Violeta."

"Noel bowed at the introduction, while the maiden held forth her little hand and said, frankly:

"I trust, senor captain, we will be the warmest friends from this day, for we owe much to you; but do you know you have not yet made known to us your name?" added Violeta, with an arch smile.

"I am called Clarence Noel, and, like your father, I am a planter. I live on the Mississippi river," and, as Noel spoke, every particle of color fled from his handsome face, leaving it as pale as death.

"We thought you were an American of wealth,
"Go down into the cabin and bring me that long rifle suspended over the companionway ladders."

"Ay, ay, captain," answered the seaman, and disappearing in the cabin he soon returned, bringing with him one of those long rifles, with octagonal barrels, small bores and flints, that have become so famous upon our Western frontier.

Again releasing the helm to Lalul, and bidding him keep the schooner steady, Noel coolly loaded the rifle, and then facing the drogher suddenly, his quick eye ran along the barrel, and then followed the flash and sharp report, while a dark-visaged figure standing upon the bow of the lugger was seen to throw up his arms wildly and fall backward to the deck.

A cheer came from the crew of the schooner, and was answered by a howl from the buccaneers, one of whom began hastily to descend from the forecastle, where he was at work out on the long spar of the foresail, where some of the lashings had been cut off by the schooner's shots.

As quick as were his movements, Noel was quicker, and, having reloading the rifle, it was again leveled, and with a loud shriek, clutching at the air, the pirate fell into the sea, and sunk beneath the waves, while his comrades hastily sought refuge from the deadly aim by hiding themselves.

"Don Octavio, I believe we are all safe, for my rifle has taught them caution, and ere they can mount their guns we will be out of range. Here, West, put this back in the cabin," and Noel handed the weapon to his mate.

Soon it was evident to all that there was no more danger to be apprehended, for the wind had driven all of her canvas spread, the schooner rapidly left her far astern, and by nightfall the drogher appeared only as a mere speck upon the ocean.

The course of the former, Violetta and her father awakened to find the schooner riding at anchor in the harbor of Havana, and, indeed, were the two Cubans most anxious to return in some way the kindness of their preserver, who, with a strange Rosenes, little like his frank and kind manner of the day before, refused all offers of hospitality from those whom his courage and skill had saved.

Hurt by his persistent refusal to become their guest, at their city mansion in Havana, and pained in no way allowed to prove their gratitude for the service rendered them, Violetta and her father at length took the helm, and the young captain of the schooner, and were rowed ashore to the nearest pier, while Lalul and the crew of the carrera quickly followed with the baggage in another boat, which immediately returned to the yacht.

CHAPTER X.

FOLLOWING FATE.

As Don Octavio Guido was about to enter a carriage, which Lalul had called upon landing, an exclamation from Violetta, who was already seated upon the back seat, caused him to glance around.

"What is it, my daughter?" asked the don, who was not yet in a pleasant mood after the refusal of Noel to become his guest.

"See! see the schooner, father." Turning quickly, Don Octavio glanced over the harbor, and, his eye falling upon the vessel, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, and said, muttering:

"Strange, strange; I must confess I am in the dark regarding the movements of that wonderful young man."

"Father, I think I have it. Don Noel evidently was not bound to Havana in his yacht, but upon some different cruise, and only put in here to oblige us, and hence his immediate departure."

"If I believe you are right, Violetta, I trust we will meet him again, for I like not to be under such heavy obligations to any man," and, giving the direction to the coachman where to drive, the don entered the carriage and drove from the pier, while
the fair Violeta turned many a longing glance toward the little schooner.

The sight that had so astonished Don Octavio and the senorita was the sudden hasty weighing of the schooner's anchor, and the rapid manner in which she was cleared with canvas, to stand swiftly down the harbor.

There was reason for this sudden movement.

An American brig of war was gliding by into the harbor.

One glance upon the vessel and Noel's face became as pale as death, for though with new spars and rigging, he recognized at once the vessel that had so long lain in his home, and on whose decks of which he had once been second in command.

"West."

"Ay, ay, sir." "What brig is that, just passing us?" and the voice of Noel was low and deep with suppressed emotion.

The seaman turned quickly, and his own face paled slightly as his eyes fell upon the vessel, while he answered, in a low tone:

"It is the brig of war Vulture."

"Yes, my good friend; she escaped being wrecked, that fearful night, and, refitted, is sent to these waters."

"Yes, sir; I see Lieutenant Ainslie upon the quarter-deck," answered West, attentively regarding the brig, though, like Noel, he kept the main boom of the schooner between himself and the view of those upon the deck of the vessel-officer.

"True, I recognize Ainslie, and he is her captain—yes, and beside him stands Calvin Bernard."

"Well, I am glad that you are both benefited by my absence, but I cannot fail to notice that the rest of us did not get himself into trouble, by his kindness in being my second."

"No, sir; he seems to have been promoted, for he wears the pilot's uniform."

"You are right, West," said Noel, glancing at the group of officers upon the brig's deck, for the two vessels were but a short distance apart.

Slowly the American vessel glided by, and headed further up the harbor, and I attentively did the two men on the schooner watch her motions until they saw her drop anchor a half-mile away.

West, we cannot remain here; we must at once away, and whither God only knows, for I am a hunted man."

"Yes, captain, we must away from here at once; but the word is given and the sea can be our home, can we bear the schooner under way?"

"Yes, immediately;" and in ten minutes more the fleet little vessel was heading for the open sea.

Having gained an offing, West called up the crew to the wheel; and, beckoning to Noel as if he would speak to him privately, descended into the cabin, where he was followed the moment after by his commander, who had been idly watching the shores of Cuba disappear astern, and with bitter thought conning over the memories of the past that then crowded upon his heart and brain.

When the schooner fled from Portsmouth, the night was stormy, and the sea was able to bear the schooner under way."

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The Flying Yankee.

"My name, as I told you, is Westley North, and my father was an American who fought bravely through the war of '76, and then went to Mexico, where his influence soon gained for him a prominent position.

"In Mexico he married, so it was believed, the daughter of a wealthy Mexican grande, and I am the result of that union, and my deformity was a curse upon my father for having ignobly deceived the trusting Mexican maiden who became his sup·pose·d wife. I say sup·pose·d, for it was not known then that the student at Oxford College, England, had secretly married a young girl, the daughter of a poor farmer.

"That poor girl he had cruelly deserted, and returning to America had believed his crime of deser·
tion would never be known.

"But, 'Man proposes and God disposes,' and thus my cruel father returned to his elegant home da one night to find there in close conversation with my mother, the wife whom he had so cruelly deserted in England.

"At the sight of my father, my mother, who had just heard the story of the wrong done her, stretched forth her hands and fell fainting to the floor while near her stood the English woman and the man who had so deceived both of them.

"'Yes, my man, what do you here?' asked my father, sternly.

"'I come to claim my husband—or his gold,' answered the woman, quietly.

"The parents glanced one moment into the face before him, and read there the wreck his deed had wrought, for all the beauty and refinement were gone, leaving behind only a look of despair, dissipa·tion and sordid gain, for upon her desertion by her husband the woman driven by despair had become hardened into the desperate adventuresses.

"'Your husband, or his gold?' said my father, sneeringly, repeating her words.

"'Yes, Westley North; but I prefer the gold, and gold I will have.'

"'One moment my father stood in silence, his eyes alternately falling upon the unconscious form of my mother, and then turning upon his wife, then he said, slowly:

"'If gold is your object, you shall have it: but upon one condition.'

"'Name it.'

"'That you await her return to consciousness and then tell her what you have said is a lie—that, formerly, you knew me well, in fact stood in a very close relation to me, but you had betrayed me, and you are legally bound to each other, and desiring to obtain from me money you determined to claim me as your husband. Will you do this, Ellen?' and as my father spoke he gazed anxiously into the face of his wife.

"'Upon one condition, Westley North.'

"'And that condition is—'

"'That you give me one hundred thousand dol·

"'One hundred thousand dollars! Woman, I would pay a Mexican to have you murdered first,' cried my father, enraged.

"'And the murder would out. Do you suppose I have not anticipated your worst and provided for it? My murder would hang you up to your own trees in less than twenty-four hours,' triumphantly re·plied my wife.

"'Ellen, you have the advantage. I will give you the money, but, so help me, God! if ever you cross my path again you shall die.'

"'So, you made me the money.'

"'I have not one tenth part of that sum by me, so meet me at my office, in the city of Mexico, to·mor·row at noon, and I will pay it to you; but you must have thence this country.

"'I will trust you, Westley North, for you dare not dis·

"My mother came to life again, and, dearly loving

my father, willingly believed the story of the woman, especially when she told it with her own lips.'

"The mate paused, his face pale as death, and with a blank manner of sympathy and friendship Noel held forth his hand and grasped that of the man before him, saying, quietly:

"'My dear friend, from my heart I feel for you.'

"The mate made no reply immediately, but again poured out a glass of brandy and dashed it off, after which he continued, in the same low and musical tone he had before spoken:

"'Yes, he was believed, and again my mother was happy, and my father seemingly so, for having paid into the hands of Ellen North the money de·

"'The woman met me at the door, and said quietly, as she observed the form in my arms:

"'Is he dead?'

"'No, but I fear he will die,' I answered, struck with her strange manner.

"'Yes, he will die; I intended he should when I fired the shot.'

"'One look of horror I turned upon her, and then

"'Hold! would you learn the wrong done me, and you and me other, by that man? Listen.'

"'Struck by her words I hesitated, and then she told me, in words that burned my brain and seared

"'I turned to the prostrate form of my father, and beheld his dying eyes fixed upon me.

"'Speak, sir: has she told the truth, for you have heard all?' asked, in a hoarse whisper.

"'She has—forgive me, my—' he could say no

"'More, for his eyes closed in death.'

"'Determining not to bring this upon my poor mother's head I told her not the story, but told her

"'Poor mother, the shock broke her heart, and a

"'Cursing my bitter fate, I would not touch the
gold left me by my father, but dividing it between

"'United by the remembrance of what I was, I was reckless of honor and life, and in the end con·

"'West, you have indeed had a wonderful life," said

"'Yes, sir, a life heaped with curses; but, capt·

"'And that purpose is—'

"'You shall hear sir. You know at present that there is trouble in Mexico, for the entrance of the

"'Well, my influence is considerable in Mexico, caused, not only by the high position held there by

"'Family and the former influence of
my father, but through my own act in giving to the church and state my vast wealth.

"In this war the clergy of Mexico are taking an important stand, and hence will willingly use their influence in my behalf, and my people, as it were, on their way for Vera Cruz, where I have information that there are several swift-sailing vessels being built, to be commissioned by the present government as cruisers against the French and Spanish, and all who oppose the new party."

"Go on, West; I am listening!"

"Ay, ay, sir. Well, by going to Vera Cruz I can soon obtain for you a commission in the Mexican service, and the command of one of those cruisers;"

"West, my noble fellow, I thank you; but it is fair that I should deprive you of this honor, to by education and experience you are in every way fitted for it."

"I may be fitted for it, captain, but I am too sensible of my hideous form ever to rig it up in the uniform of an officer. No, sir, I follow you, and no other way.

"We will go to Vera Cruz, get the vessel and free commission, which, by the way, from Mexico makes us little better than buccaneers, and then, sailing for an island in the Gulf, we may man the craft, as a crew, as reckless, as daring, as ever trod a deck; for, by visiting my old cruising-ground, I can rally around me a set of fellows who will be most willing to cast in their lot with the projector's name, by shipping as seamen on board a vessel-of-war, even though she flies Mexican colors."

"West, I must confess I had decided upon no plan for the future, and you shall have your way; so go on deck and put the schooner away for Vera Cruz," said Noel, thoughtfully; the mate arose, thanked his commissary, and soon gave the necessary orders to the helmsman, and away the vessel flew toward the shores of Mexico.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW CRUISER.

Toward the close of one of those balmy, hazy evenings, so common in southern latitudes, and a month or so after the day upon which the exiled yacht was put away for Vera Cruz—the City of the True Cross, and also, as it is figuratively called upon account of its strength, the "Iron Gate of Mexico," a schooner of three hundred tons was running close along the bright waters of the Pacific. The vessel had been lighted to port and starboard, she was making eight knots, and director the wind before the wind.

The schooner had a decided look of mischief about her; her hull was low in the water, of great length, and considered of breadth of beam and ship, with the very heavy sails she carried, spreading canvas enough for a vessel twice her size, made it evident she was built for the purpose of great speed.

Excepting the bright new sails, and a crimson belt running around her hull, everything about her was as black as night, presenting the appearance of a vessel intended for hard sea service.

Along the high and strong bulwarks, of sufficient height to hide the upright form of a man, there appeared no sign of life, though a glance on her quarter showed that she carried four long eighteen to a side, while two thirty-two-pounder pivots were advantageously mounted fore and aft, to be used as bow and stern chasers, and also as a broadside. The number of men that would have been looked for aboard a vessel of her armament, for but a dozen seamen were visible, including two who held the wheel.

A strange circumstance about the schooner was that upon each sail was worked in red silk, a large pair of wings, presenting a striking appearance relieved against the white canvas; also, upon either broadside, a large red wing, instead of a figurehead. The schooner was named the Red-Wing in keeping with this strange device.

Upon the quarter-deck stood two officers, who, though dressed in the gorgeous uniform of the Mexican navy, the reader will at once recognize as Noel and West, for their visit to Santa Cruz had been most successful; a swift, well-sailing vessel had been procured, out of his own means by the young American, after he had disposed of his yacht, and he had found that West had not exaggerated his influence over his government, for the commission of a cruiser, under the flag of Mexico, had been readily granted.

With great care Noel had attended to the armament and fitting out of his vessels, which he manned only with the crew of the yacht, for it was his intention further to follow the advice of West, and run to the haunts of the Caribbean pirates for the requisites of a privateer. Well knowing that they would prove a daring and determined set.

After running wing-and-wing down the Gulf for some hours, the schooner's course was changed, so as to bring the wind abreast, the sheet being drawn flat aft; and, close-hauled upon the wind, the graceful vessel bent bravely to the influence of the stiff breeze.

"She sails like a witch with mainsail," said Noel, gazing with pride upon his beautiful vessel. In obedience to orders there arose from the deck a fluttering mass of canvas to the fo'c'sle and main-topmasts, and settling into a long gaff-top-sail, which greatly added to the speed of the schooner.

"Upon the deck of this fast craft I fear no vessel," added West, after watching for awhile the action of the Red Wing under the heavy pressure.

"Ay, captain; we can show our heels to all Americans, and easily run away from any Spaniard we can catch with."

The wind favoring, noon of the following day saw the beautiful schooner standing majestically into a miniature bay that indented the shores of a small island of the West Indies.

West had the helm, and skillfully guided the cruiser through the dangerous channel, while at his side stood Noel, his brow dark and gloomy, for memory would haunt him, and he could not but remember the circumstances of his former visit to that island, when in the boats of the Vulture he had boldly attacked the pirates in their stronghold and broken up their operations. He had believed, their hare, let us try her with mainsail," said Noel, gazing with pride upon his beautiful vessel. In obedience to orders there arose from the deck a fluttering mass of canvas to the fo’c’sle and main-topmasts, and settling into a long gaff-top-sail, which greatly added to the speed of the schooner.

Suddenly from the foliage-clad hills side there came a puff of smoke, a roar broke the Sabbath-like stillness of the scene, and the next moment an iron ball whirled across the schooner's bow.

"They are wide awake, captain, I see; so we might as well display the private signals," said West. Noel at once ran up to the foremost head a white flag with a scroll of parchment engrav'd in the center, while from the peak fluttered a large ensign of crimson, white and black.

A moment more and the same colors were displayed in the hands of two men, who stepped from the retreat and waved them toward the schooner.

"All right, captain; now I will go ashore, taking two men in the gig with me; while you can stand off and on in this little bay. If I do not return in two hours' time, you may know I have been treacherously dealt with, and at once put to sea, and return to Vera Cruz, where you can get a crew.

"If successful, I will soon be back and bring with me the young commander of this piratical haunt, who, if I do not misjudge him, will be only too anxious to take his head out of the hangman's coil by vailing it in the Mexican flag."

A moment more the ex-commissary left the schooner; and taking the helm, Noel, with the Red Wing under reduced sail, stood off and on to await his return.

Keeping his eye directly landward, he saw his officer run ashore, where he was met by a number of men, who appeared to greet him warmly, and watching them narrowly for a while, he observed a
The Flying Yankee.

After a conversation of half an hour more, Muriel, the newly-appointed lieutenant, went ashore to communicate his tidings to his men, and upon the following morning the beautiful schooner set sail from the island, her deck crowded with a hardy, daring crew, attired in the Mexican uniform, and ready to fight their guns to the bitter end, for one and all were at once won over by Noel's frank and manly manner toward them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEA ROVER'S GIFT.

Through the serving out of the bay of the Corsair Island, the Red Wing commenced her career as a cruiser, and ere many months became known in the Southern seas as one of the most daring vessels that ever floated.

Constantly on the alert, and flying from sea to sea, Noel soon gained the name of an implacable foe to Spain and France, and though considered by the natives of the world as little else than a free rover, he yet won the admiration of his foes, and the respect of the English and American vessels-of-war then cruising in the Gulf of Mexico.

Many were the vessels-of-war that had been sent forth to hunt down and capture the dreaded rover, but still the daring cruiser plowed the seas, and in defiance her sharp prow would cut the very waters guided by Spain's strongest forts, and her anchors would be cleared away beneath the very guns of the Moro, those who gazed upon her, lying quietly at anchor, believing her to be some graceful trading schooner, until, when the moon shone softly and the stars were out, she would disappear, and the Moro knew not where.

But already the Red Wing had been successful, and in the Gulf of Mexico a victory had been gained at a cost of but little. Noel, having narrowly escaped the Havanas in disguise and captured or scuttled the unsuspecting merchantman, had returned to his ship, and was now off the coast of Cuba, his mind occupied with the thought of his friend, now a prize in the hands of the Dominicans.

"I have just heard," said Muriel, as he stepped on board, "that a prize of considerable value has been captured by the Dominican fleet. Noel is on board, and I think he will be here to-night."

"Then I shall see him," said Mr. Muriel, "to-morrow; for to-night I shall have to attend to the affairs of the ship."

"Yes, sir," replied the captain, "you have my order to return to your duties."
that, and have now called you to the cabin to make known my plan."

"I am listening, captain."

"Well, I am now en route to Vera Cruz, to tender my resignation to the Mexican authorities, and, having done so, I will go on as the sea. But, run her to the American coast, and get my number in crew complete, for we have suffered considerably of late in men, and then under simply my flag of the Red War, as an unknown vessel, against the navy of England.

"The schooner, as you know, belongs to me; Marriel and the crew are no lovers of England, and I am about to go, of my own free will. Now, my young friend, give me any assist to the crew of an iron hand."

"Her is my hand in the enterprise, captain, and gladly do I second you, and I see no obstacle in the way of perfect success."

"I knew you would second me, West, and hence I have first made known to you my intentions."

"Thank God, though our beautiful schooner has often run aground of American guns, we have never returned a shot upon the flag, and once, as you remember, came very near being sunk by our resistance to that plucky little cruiser, which the schooner could have taken in a ten minutes' combat."

"Yes, I remember. But now to the present. When I ascended to the mast-head, I observed two instead of one sail in sight, and a close observation proved to me the war-ships of the English, and that I was about to be run down by the iron hand of the crew of the English on our English commerce, our navy consider it their duty to retaliate, and the Vulture would be only too happy to overhaul the Red War."

"I will say it, captain; but still to the strange sail—an engagement will follow."

"Without doubt, for Allen Ailsie and the English crew will never fly from an enemy because he is their superior in guns and men. A round shot of a heavy gun suddenly rolled across the waters, followed by another and another in quick succession.

"In an instant Noel sprung to the deck, followed by West."

"Captain Noel, youonder two vessels are maneuvering to engage each other," said Lieutenant Muriel."

"Yes, there will be an action, and a desperate one."

"It seems rash for youner brig to meet his adversary, which, if I mistake not, is an Englishman."

"Yes, rash; but the battle is not always to the strong, as have the Carthaginians, and attacked American commerce, our navy consider it their duty to retaliate, and the Vulture would be only too happy to overhaul the Red War."

"A little more than a mile distant, the Red Wing appeared to be unnoticed by the sea-warriors, as with a heavy spread of canvas, and her men at her guns, she bounded swiftly over the moonlit waters, heading directly toward the scene of carnage; but from the schooner's decks the flash of the battle-lanterns the crash of the timbers, the talk of the officers, and low murmur and re-echoing voice of the crew, mingling with the roar of the guns, were distinctly heard, and all on board the Red Wing gazed alternately upon the terrible scene, and then upon the iron hand of their commander, who stood with one hand resting upon the bulwarks, and his eyes firmly fixed upon the action.

"But one wondered as his strange course, but none dared to inquire why he thus was running his vessel into the lion's mouth."

"Mr. Muriel, an unlucky shot from the Englishman has carried away the American's tiller-ropes, and she is getting worsted."

"Aye, aye; they are pouring it upon her hot and heavy," answered the young Spaniard; and after a moment he continued:"

"See! if she does not strike soon they will sink her."

"At the guns there! Double-shot all! Aim at yonder large sloop-of-war. Ready all—fire!"

"A wild, ringing tone of the voice of the commander, whose voice was like magic, for they knew that their commander was terribly in earnest, and although they never had fired upon an English vessel before, they hesitatingly followed it, as a fierce broadside of flame shot from the schooner, and a howl of iron was hurled upon the Englishman, but than half a mile distant.

"The order to keep steady—ready about—forward and astern, there keep those thirty-twos playing with the broadside guns—ready all—fire!"

"The voice of Noel arose loud and clear, and his comrade were obeyed with alacrity. The crew, who, accustomed to scenes of carnage, were in their element when fighting their guns, and in a few moments' time the graceful and obedient schooner had delivered half a dozen broadsides from both starboard and port, and with terrible effect, for the foremost of the Englishman had been cut away, the mizen-topmast was tottering, and the bowsprit hung dangling in the water as the vessel broached to."

"The English captain, without order was quickly obeyed and the crashing of timbers and cries of the wounded proved that the iron messenger had found their target.

"But still the roar of the British guns was heard, responded to by those from the Vulture, and then before the bows of the Red Wing loomed the massive hull of the sloop-of-war, which still nobly fought, though between two fires."

"At the guns there, double load with grape—steady as you are, helmsman—fire!"

"A wall of flame, a hurting of iron, a roar, a crash, shrieks and groans followed, a hull of an instant, and then a cry came from the Englishman:"

"Clear starboard; we are done for."

"Haul down your flag, and a boat from the American brig-of-war Vulture will board you!" cried Noel, in a voice that was heard by the crews of each vessel.

"Ay, ay; but what schooner is that?" came the sullen reply from the Englishman, but no answer was returned from the Red Wing, which, still enveloped in smoke, floated slowly toward the wind, leaving the vessel she had so nobly aided to capture a prize to the Vulture, which, but for the timely aid
The Flying Yankee.

CHAPTER XIV.
AFTER THE COMBAT.

Still, enveloped in the smoke of battle that floated and obstructed the wind, and appearing with her low hull and tapering spars, like a specter shrouded in mist, the Red Wing flew on over the moonlit waters, leaving behind her astonishment mingled with awe at her strange course.

Spreading all the canvas that would draw, Noel paced the quarter-deck with a brow still stern, but upon which rested a look of satisfaction, for he felt that he had done his duty nobly in defense of his dear old ship. Determined to now make known his new-formed resolution to his officers, he called to Muriel to summon them to the cabin.

Soon they were assembled, and Noel said, quickly: "Well, gentlemen, you are an American, and also that war has been declared between my country and England. Hitherto this vessel has served under the colors of Mexico, and I need not tell you that those colors are little ones to us; but now, as the schooner belongs to me, I intend to put her in another service, and am bound to Vera Cruz to resign the commission I hold from Mexico."

"We are listening, captain," said Hernando Muriel, quietly, as Noel paused for an instant.

"True—it is my intention to resign my commission, and then perform the duties of myself, schooner, of the crew as will follow me, to the American Republic."

"Enter the service of the United States, captain?" asked Lieutenant Hart, a young American, who had been tempted by the romance of a sea life to leave a happy home in New England, and since had been a wanderer about the face of the earth.

Rejoiced at the prospect of returning home again with the flag of a naval officer, he was too willing to command in his intention, as he believed it to be.

"In one respect, yes, Mr. Hart," continued Noel.

"We are to sea, the United States, and as I know that you have done so well to me, and you are also willing, I must now set you the task of the very

"Good friends, I am delighted to have your support, and I feel that the crew will be easily won over, for none of them, I believe, hold sympathy with England.

"To-might I anticipated my intention, and turned my broadsides upon an English vessel-of-war, that our country may have sunk or captured, by the Vulture."

"That act will cause us no trouble, as in a few days we will no longer be in the service of Mexico, but cruising the ocean under a flag of our own, for the destruction of the English fleet."

"Take care, and the Vulture may be in the English waters, where it is also my intention to cease hostilities toward France and Spain, and while aiding America, keep in mystery who or what we are, for I will report to no Americans."

"After leaving Vera Cruz, I intend to run to some port where I can refit the schooner, rig her in new canvas, leaving out our red wings, and painting her white, so disguise the vessel that none of her old friends or foes will recognize her.

"Your old piratical haunt, Muriel, I will make our rendezvous, and also I have after plans in view that at present I cannot disclose."

"Now we will go to the deck and make known to the crew my intention of leaving the service of Mexico, and those among them who choose to follow my fortunes will land with their personal property at Vera Cruz.

"You will find me as ready as we are to follow your lead, captain," said Murriel, as they ascended to the deck, where the crew were soon assembled, and received the proposals of their commander with enthusiastic cheers.

In due time the schooner dropped anchor in the harbor of Vera Cruz and Noel tendered his resignation to the Mexican authorities, who accepted it with deep regret, for they were well aware of the valuable services he had rendered their empire.

Purchasing all necessary stores and equipments, and securing a full complement of men from several American vessels then blockaded in the port, Noel secured a light sailing schooner, loaded her with his purchases, and a week after the arrival of the Red Wing, the two vessels set sail one dark, stormy night, and headed for the lonely island which had been the refuge of the English fleet, and the young commander intended should be his secret rendezvous, for Noel determined he would not be known to his government other than as some mysterious friend ever on the alert to secretly lend a helping hand.

While the Red Wing was sailing for the island, where she is to be metamorphosed into an American privateer, I will return to the night of the engagement between the Vulture and the English fleet, and relate the circumstances following the departure of the mysterious schooner.

As Noel had surmised, the Vulture had been reformed after being wrecked by the lighting, and was placed under command of Allen Ainslie, while Calvine Bernard, after a court-martial investigation of the part he took in the duel between his captain and Lieutenant, had been found guilty of mutiny, and was allowed to return to his ship, in which he soon rose to the rank of Lieutenant.

Allen Ainslie had proved himself an able officer, and under his command the Vulture had won renewed honors during her cruise in northern waters.

Thus it was that Captain Ainslie determined to fight instead of fly, for the determination that would have cost him dear had it not been for the timely aid of the Red Wing, a schooner he had often endeavored to capture, and which had always eluded him.

When the English commander had hailed the schooner, and received no answer a feeling of awe came upon the crew, for her mysterious approach, hidden by the smoke of her guns, her still unopened mystery, silent and beautiful, caused them to look upon her as a weird craft with a weird crew, and many low whispers ran around the forecastle about their Having surrendered to a phantom ship commanded by his Satanic majesty.

On board the Vulture the feeling was still more suspicious, among the seamen, of their having received aid from the devil, and few of them felt at all comfortable as the English fleet appeared, and the commander filled with favor, for they feared that he would be enemies to them only to make his presence more severely felt at a future day.

As soon as Allen Ainslie could collect his boat's crew he left the Vulture and was put on board the English vessel, where he was met by her commander, who offered him the hand of friendship, invited him into the cabin, as he tendered his sword.

"No, captain; retain your sword, sir, and as your vessel and crew, like my own, have suffered severely,
if you will give me your parole d' honneur you can still hold command and follow me into port."

"Assuredly I give my parole, sir, and heartily thank you for your kindness; but to whom have I surrendered, may I ask?" answered the Englishman.

"I am Alden Ainslie, commander of the American brigs-of-war Vulture; but the name of my timely ally I am ignorant of."

"I am Commodore Cutting, an officer of the navy, and a strange commander, I judge; but doubtless some American privateer, that, trusting to her swift heels, ventured near enough to give you a helping hand, and I assure you a strong one, for he raked me fore and aft with terrible effect."

"But why should he thus disguise his name and nation?" asked Captain Ainslie, in a puzzled tone.

"That I know not, for one would think he would only be too willing to exhibit his bountiful form, and crow loudly over his achi-veiments."

"Yes, one would think so, yet yonder he goes, still enveloped in smoke and looking most spectral in the moonlight," and all eyes turned upon the flying schooner.

"Could you not bring him to? I have some long-range guns forward and horse service, and as a curiosity to see the bold mariner who controls yonder craft," and the Englishman raised his glass to his eye.

"No, thank you, I will not do so; he has served me nobly, and I will respect his desire to remain unknown," answered Ainslie.

"Nobly said, sir; but my men believe yonder craft is run by a devilish crew, and though education destroys or should destroy, superstition, yet I confess to a feeling of uneasiness regarding her strange appearance, even though the voice of her commander, when he hailed me, had a most metallic ring."

"I am a puzzled man, but attribute the strange conduct of the craft to a freak of the command, and not to an unearthly agency; but now I must return to my vessel, and as soon as my damages are somewhat repaired I will heave for Malta, where you will please follow, even though we become separated on the way."

You may rely upon my honor, Captain Ainslie, and I thank you for your kind consideration of myself and crew," and the Englishman held forth his hand toward Alden, who grasped it firmly, for he respected his brave though unfortunate foe.

They then parted; but at daybreak their vessels having been temporarily repaired, the dead consigned to their sea-graves, and the wounded cared for, the Vulture got under way, followed by the Englishman, a lover of which fate they passed the kindness shown them by their brave young captor, who had proven himself as generous as he was daring.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FLYING YANKEE.

A YEAR passed after the incidents related in the foregoing chapters, and the Vulture, thoroughly refitted and with a better armament and larger crew, was again at sea.

Her course lay to the southward, down the Atlantic coast from Charleston, from whence she had sailed to Bermuda, to bear Commodore Cutting to take command of the American squadron then cruising in the Gulf of Mexico.

It was a clear moonlight night, but the sea ran high with the gales blowing from the north-east; but bravely the noble vessel struggled through the waters, staggering through only under her storm-sails.

Under the decks were officers and crew some enjoying the struggle between the ocean and the vessel and others attending carefully to the duties devolving upon them.

Standing near the wheel upon the quarter-deck were several officers chatting, and recognizable among them were the tall and commanding form of Commodore Cutting, the elegant figure of Alden Ainslie, and the indolent, graceful Calvin Beraud, whose left arm was worn in a sling, for he had not yet fully recovered from a wound received in the battle with the English schooner Cutty Sark.

The arrival of the Vulture in port, with her larger foe as a prize, had created considerable excitement, especially when Captain Ainslie, disclaiming all credit, had made known the circumstance of being and by his strange ally.

Since then, incoming vessels had reported the appearance at sea of a strange craft that was the true friend of America, and of the bittest foe of England, and many were the rumour and strange stories of how she was seen only at night, enveloped in a cloud of smoke, and looking like a specter barque, also seeming like one, as, excepting a stern hail from her and the sign of the white guns, no one had ever held communication with a soul on board.

The subject of conversation that night on the Vulture, as she bound over the gale-swept ocean, was this strange craft, and Commodore Cutting had just remarked his inability to solve the mystery, when Alden Ainslie rejoined:

"Commodore, I am not superstitious, but I assure you, the sudden advent and e'er so serviceable and rapid craft when she saved the Vulture from capture made a deep impression upon me, an impression which the numerous rumors now afloat but serve to strengthen."

"And that impression is, Captain—?

"I hardly know; for, though I would laugh to scorn the belief that the craft is a phantom, strongly inclined to favor America, yet, when wake, and there, the answer is, a white schooner of remarkable build and speed, and one that carries full sail in a storm, which would run any other vessel beneath the seas."

"And one that no one has ever been on board of, as far as we know—that has only hailed from her own decks, and though capturing prizes has never boarded them, but driven them before her into some port, and the seaman safe under the guns of our forts," put in an old weather-beaten sailing-master, who had passed forty years upon the ocean.

"Has she ever been seen in the daytime?" asked Commodore Cutting, with interest.

"Yes," returned the sailing-master, "she has been seen in daylight by her prizes, for I talked with a man who was mate of that English powder-ship she captured."

"And what said the mate?" asked Commodore Cutting, with interest, while the group of officers gathered more closely around to hear the reply.

"He told me with the tale, and, though he is a kind of kinsman of mine, Thompson—he spelt his name with a P, sir—well, he told me that they were running along pretty lively one night, and hoping to reach a haven held by the English, when suddenly they descried a misty blue light across the ocean, and in its midst was the most beautiful speck-craft eye ever beheld.

Thompson says all of them were scared nearly to death, when a flash, a heavy boom and a whirl of solid shot proved the specter could use mortal means, and this reassuring the captain of the powder-ship, he hoisted all sail and determined to escape, for his vessel was one of the fast ones at sea; but crowding sail was useless, for in less than an hour the stranger came up close astern, and hailing in a loud voice, told the Englishman to change his course and steer for Charleston, as a prize to the United States Government.

"Compelled to obey, the Englishman did as ordered, and the stranger then shortened sail so as to keep half a mile distance, and, when his course had not continued, day and night, until he drove the powder-ship under the guns of Fort Sumter, when the queer one put about and headed seaward."

"But what did your mate say the craft looked like by daylight?" asked Alden Ainslie.

"He said she was a beauty, and only once could he
see more than one man on board, and that was the helm-man; but he related how, when his captain thought one day in a blow, as his pursuer had dropped a mile astern, he would try to escape that, that suddenly a hundred forms clad in snow-white—you see the schooner was white from hull to topmast—were formed, singing to work lively, and in a minute the Flying Yankee, as the Britishers call the stranger, was after them like a hound, and the poor captain had to once more keep on his prescribed course, still dogged by his captor.

"A remarkable story, sailing-master, but it is generally believed, and I confess to a deep-seated desire to know more of this terror of the British—the Flying Yankee; why, I would give my next year's pay to solve that enigma!"

"Sail, ho!"

The ringing cry of the lookout from the mast-head broke short the words of the commodore, and caused all to start, for the conversation they were holding regarding the mysterious character of the strange vessel, caused all to feel a certain superstitious dread in their hearts.

"Whereaway, sir?"

"She is not in sight, now, sir: but a moment ago I beheld her—sail, ho!"

"Sail, ho!"

"Sail, ho!"

The cries rung out suddenly from a dozen different parts of the vessel, and all eyes turned to windward, where they beheld a sight that sent a thrill of horror through the sails.

A mile or more distant, and distinctly seen in a bluish misty cloud, that looked spectral in the moonlight, was a large schooner, crouching low in the water, and with her taping masts crowded with men. As the sun gleamed on the sails and flashed as a bird, she seemed to fly from wave to wave.

"God in Heaven! It is the specter craft!" cried the old sailing-master, while a dozen voices said in unison.

"The Flying Yankee!"

"Yes, boys, the Flying Yankee; and it remains with us to solve the mystery, for though she has proven a friend to us, we shall find out who and what she is. Clear that port-gun, Mr. Barnard!" cried the commodore, cheerfully.

"It is impossible to clear for action in this gale, commodore," suggested Allen Ainslie, as the men hesitated what to do.

"True; well, we'll hide our time and see the result. See! how she comes down upon us!" said Commodore Cutting pointing to the misty-looking schooner, which apparently was every stiction of the snowy canvas spread, was rushing down upon their quarter, and rapidly overhauling the brig.

"Yes, she seems to fly, for I can already distinguish the two men at her wheel," answered Captain Ainslie, as he turned his glass once more on the approaching vessel.

All stood in silence, regarding the stranger, each officer and man instinctively taking his position for action, and each one turning over in his mind what could be the meaning of the strange appearance.

Bounding madly forward, over and through the waves-swept waters, the Flying Yankee came on, until she obtained the position to windward, and off the starboard quarter of the brig, when suddenly a tall form, clothed in white, sprang into the main shrouds, and in trumpet-tones came the hail:

"Ahoy!"

"My God! he knows us! It is the devil that runs that craft!" cried the sailing-master, with awe. White, sterner said Captain Ainslie, and the answer came, "Ahoy! Is that the Flying Yankee?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came the answer.

"Well, what would you?" again asked Alcen.

"Cutting is an innocent vessel, going to take command of the Southern squadron; but your fleet was defeated some days since, and driven into Mobile, where they now are, while a large English man-of-war, in a crippled condition, is, at present, repairing damages in the mouth of the St. John's river. The two vessels taken by the English fleet, are now armed with the guns, and lying in wait to take you by strategy upon your arrival."

The above had all been spoken in clear tones, and one and all heard every word with strange surprise and deep regret that such information received from their mysterious companion.

"Is all this true you tell?" called out the commodore, in his stentorian voice.

"I thank you; but in the name of Heaven, who, and what are you?"

"The Flying Yankee and the Ocean Outcast."

The words rang with metallic earnestness, and a tone of deep bitterness evaded, but could not be said, the commander of the weird looking vessel sprung back upon his deck, and instantly the sharp bowsprit pointed just into the wind's eye, when, away darted the Flying Yankee, back in the direction from whence she had first been discovered.

"Well, commodore, what do you think of that?"

"I know not what to think, Ainslie; but I believe his words, and shall act accordingly; what say you?"

"As you do; I believe the expected British fleet has had good weather, and arrived two weeks sooner than we, anticipating the British squadron; but, would it not be a good idea, sir, to put into the mouth of the St. John's, and verify the statement of the Flying Yankee? We may be able to observe and capture the same, and thus that is a good plan, and one I will act upon, so give the necessary orders, please. Ah! yonder still flies that weird craft under a press of sail that, in itself, would make any ship a ship under; and the commodore pointed to the distant schooner, still beating up into the wind, without having reduced a single square foot of canvas, as she sped on, leaving behind her a most uncomfortable feeling in the minds of all on board the Vulture, for they could not get rid of the thought that some supernatural agency controlled the destinies of the mysterious unknown.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GRAND PRIZE.

Toward nightfall of the day following the meeting with the Flying Yankee, the Vulture sighted the coast of Florida, and a short time after, a vessel came into the mouth of the St. John's river, where she came to anchor close under the shadows of the foliage-clad banks.

Captain Bernard was then sent off in the largest cutter, with a picked crew well-armed, to reconnoiter and discover the whereabouts of the British vessel-of-war, for none doubted that the words of the Flying Yankee would prove true.

Midnight came, and the returning boat was observed approaching through the gloom with rapid stroke, and, springing to the deck, Calvin Bernard inquired his superior officer if the British vessel, as well as he could judge, a large, square-rigger, carrying forty guns and a full crew, was lying moored to the river-bank, some six miles above, while her men were encamped on the shore near by.

"I should think she was undergoing a thorough overhaul," continued the lieutenant. "for all of her crew appeared to be ashore, assembled around their camp-fires, and I noticed that her rigging mast had been shot away with her haubergs seriously shattered, for I was within a cable's length of her, and the camp-fires cast a redly light upon her hull."

"She is wholly unsuspecting of our presence," said Captain Ainslie.

"Yes, it must be, and can be taken by surprise; otherwise it would be madness to attempt to attack a vessel so very much our superior as— God bless us! we're there!"

All turned quickly at the sudden exclamation of the young lieutenant, and beheld almost upon them, and sweeping by before a stiff breeze, the Flying
Yankee, still carrying a press of canvas and enveloped in the mists of a fog that appeared to pervade her everywhere from topmast to deck.

Ere a word could be said the same form, before seen, sprang into the main shrouds, and his clear voice rang out:

"Ahoy! the Vulture!"

"Ahoy!" cried Commodore Cutting.

"Would you take the Englishman, get at once under way, and throw the broadside at your heels?" said the Flying Yankee, whose crew had rounded a bend that appeared to them to be inhabited by the Vulture.

"Ahoy! that Vulture!"

"Ahoy!" cried Commodore Cutting.

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"Strange, very strange."

"It is indeed; yet in the tones of her commander—and I confess I never heard a voice more ringing and stern—I think I trace something familiar—"

"And I also, Commodore, for I could swear to having heard his voice before. Have you thought of whom it reminds you?" asked Alton Ainslie.

"Yes, it sounds like the voice of poor Moncrief in battle, as long as I remember me for years."

"Yes, it had the same startling, ringing tones I have heard from Noel when in action, but then it cannot be he."

"Why, of course, Moncrief? Was not that the name of one of your most brilliant officers, who slew his superior in a duel and then fled his native land? I was cruising in these waters at the time," said Sir Mac.

"Yes: poor fellow, he fled in his own yacht, accompanied by one companion who had aided his escape from the Vulture, and as he put into New York and armed and equipped his little craft, I feared he had determined to turn irreverent, and my fears were realized."

"He became a pirate, then?" asked Sir Mac.

"Oh, yes, he was bent upon a sad fate; for some two years ago his yacht, which had been committing some depredations along the Gulf coast, and upon Southern commerce, was attacked by a revenue cutter, and refusing to surrender, was sunk with all on board."

"He died game, even though a pirate."

"Yes, it was just like Moncrief to die at his guns, poor fellow, and an expression of said regret stole over the face of the fop, for he had dearly loved the erring young naval officer, to whom he owed his life; for in a gale at sea, when swept away by a huge wave that washed his vessel's decks, Commodore Cutting vowed he would not sink to rise no more, had not Noel, knowing his commander could not swim, sprung overboard and sustained him until the life-boat was launched and both were rescued.

Noel Moncrief was a midshipman then, and years had gone by since, but still the old seaman had not forgotten the brave preserver of his life, and mourned in secret his fate.

CHAPTER XVII.
ON BOARD THE SEA-SLIPPER.

One pleasant afternoon, toward the close of the English and American war of '12, where sailors for a landman and landswoman, were two other passengers, the one a dignified, noble-looking gentleman, with snow-white hair and mustache, and a figure erect and military, while leaning upon his cane, the other a dapper little fellow, his brother and daughter wore a joyous look as the Sea-Slipper leaned majestically to the breeze and bounded rapidly along the restless waters.

Promenading the deck, with an exceedingly steady tread for a landsman and landswoman, was a man who had clearly loved the erring young naval officer, to whom he owed his life; in a gale at sea, when swept away by a huge wave that washed his vessel's decks, Commodore Cutting vowed he would not sink to rise no more, had not Noel, knowing his commander could not swim, sprung overboard and sustained him until the life-boat was launched and both were rescued.

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Heading Gulfward, for she was bound to Havana, the ship sped on with great speed, dashing the foam from her bows, and trailing after her a snowy, vailike wake, as the stiff breeze urged her onward.

Anxious to gain good offing, the captain of the Sea-Slipper paced his deck, eyed his ship narrowly to see that every rope and sail was in its place, and ever and anon scanned the horizon with eager glances, for he despaired of gaining the open water, even if he lost his ship in the attempt; but, being a brave man, and the commander of a vessel that had seldom met her equal upon the ocean in point of speed, he decided to run the gauntlet, if possible, and reach Havana for he had a valuable freight destined for the West Indies, besides several Spanish and American passengers, anxious to leave the country in search of home, others on account of business, and a few for pleasure.

Miles off to windward the eye of Captain Davenport noted several sail, which he well knew to be British cruisers, and from them his glance fell upon a dark cloud that broke the level circuit of the horizon, and his face wore a serious look, for he had not anticipated having to brave a storm as well as the English, for well he knew, unless he gained a good offing before the gale broke upon the sea, he might be driven back by it, or into the clutches of a Spanish race; but the reader has let them meet before.

Near by the captain, leaning upon the taffrail, and also glancing at the distant sail, stood two personages, whose bronzed complexions and dark eyes betokened their national origin, that they had not Spanish race; but the reader has let them meet before.

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The Flying Yankee.

"Dead ahead, sir!"
"What do you make of her, my man?"

She is schooner rig, sir, and is standing toward us.

"All right; keep a close watch upon her movements," called out the captain; and then, turning to his passengers, who were now grouped near him, he continued:

"Doubtless she is one of our American privateers, and if so, will divide the honor with us of being chased by your two British cruisers. I have no cause to dread capture, captain, for the Sea-Slipper runs like the wind," said Colonel Moncrief, gazing with admiration at the speed of the ship, as, with everything drawing sust, she bounded majestically along.

"No, sir; I fear none of those heavy craft, unless we run on them ere we know it, and they cripple us; and, in fact, I believe there is scarcely a vessel afloat that can catch us in a storm chase."

"You forget the Flying Yankee, captain," said the first mate, who was standing near, his glass leveled upon the newly-discovered sail.

"The Flying Yankee! You have then met with this ocean mystery, captain?" said Colonel Moncrief, with interest, and around the old seaman at once gathered a crowd of passengers.

"I have, sir, and the craft is indeed a mystery; in fact, I have not only met her, but the Sea-Slipper was once saved from capture by her."

"Tell me what the story, captain?" asked Don Octavio, with considerable interest—an interest that seemed shared by all present.

"It is a short story, but I will tell it you with pleasure, ladies and gentlemen.

"It was on my last run into Mobile that I was chased by two British war-vessels, a brig and a square-rigger; and I was showing them a clean pair of heels and rapidly running for a haven, when suddenly, a height of land came in sight, and that at once showed armed ports and the flag of England waving over them.

"This was a scrape I little liked, and I felt that my change of course would not cover me from punishment, for the vessels in chase were but four miles astern, and the one last discovered, just in my course, and hardly half that distance away.

"I determined to round the point upon a different course from the one I was then on, and endeavor to keep the land between myself and my new enemy.

"But it was no use, and I was about to attempt to run aground when I saw a straggling cloud of land coming in view, and I descried a strange sail coming from a small inlet and shooting just across my bow, so as to head me off, I believed; but I soon found it was the brig that was the gun, for the new-comer, whose audacity surprised myself and crew not a little, she being a schooner and a little able, we believed, to cope with the powerful brig-of-war, headed directly for the Englishman.

"Lying low in the water, and with a prow as sharp as a blade, her decks overshadowed by masses of snow-white sails, the plucky little craft flew on at a speed I believed hardly possible, and coming in range of our foregun, mounted upon her forecastle, the Englishman, who was soon compelled to let the Sea-Slipper go, and look after the schooner.

"Well, a precision that was remarkable, the schooner's guns were fired, and though the brig opened heavily also, it was of no use, for in fifteen minutes she was a wreck, and the daring craft that had prevented our two vessels from standing out to sea, without having received a single shot, to mar the beauty of her white hull and sails.

"As for the Sea-Slipper, she escaped, and as far as I know, she sailed the schooner flying seaward, firing rapidly from her stern guns upon the two vessels-of-war, that had given up chasing me to pursue the audacious American craft.

"That little craft was what is known as the Flying Yankee, and whoever her commander is, he has won a reputation for bravery and seamanship second to that of no man in our navy."

"If he be a man at all," suggested Mr. Conover the mate, in a voice of superstitious doubt.

"Nonsense, Conover; the schooner has won her name of Flying Yankee by her wonderful speed, and her determined war upon the enemies of our mighty Yankee nation. As for the mystery which overhangs her, it arises from the fact that, excepting to hull a vessel, none on board who queer craft ever hold converse with mortals."

"How about the smoke in which she seems to float, captain, and the strange light that hangs around her?" asked the mate.

"There you have me, for that I cannot explain."

"Does she carry no colors, captain?" asked Colonel Moncrief.

"She carries no national colors, sir—only a flag representing a schooner sailing upon a tempest-tossed sea, the craft appearing to be worked in white silk, with the waters around her a pale green, while a shadowy cloud appears to pervade the air around the weird looking craft."

"If every report be true, the Flying Yankee has been of the greatest service to the American cause, for I have heard of her protecting ships from capture at sea, hiding them in some remote point of our coast, and also of several desperate actions she has had with British cruisers," said Colonel Moncrief.

"Yes, sir, and report says true of her, but—What do you say, my man? and the captain glanced toward the man in the main-top who had hailed the deck.

"The sail ahead, sir, is the Flying Yankee."

"Instantly there was a scene of excitement on deck, and while the captain and mate ascended the rigging with their glasses, the eyes of the passengers were turned upon the distant vessel, which was now plainly visible to the naked eye."

"Senorita, will you look?" and Don Guido tendered his own handsome spy-glass to Eve, who, with a smile of thanks, took it, and turned it upon the strange sail.

"My daughter believes she can trace a resemblance between the schooner and one of her build that often used to be seen upon our coast, and which Spaniards had cause to dread. I refer to the Yankee cruiser that gained such a name for daring and was known as the Red Wing," said Don Octavio, addressing Colonel Moncrief.

"Yes, I have heard of the cruiser; but of late years she has disappeared from the seas. Some say she foundered with all on board," answered the colonel.

"No, senor, I am confident you are mistaken; the Red Wing is the same, for I was wont to sit in our plantation home and gaze for hours upon the Red Wing, whose cruising-ground was near us for months," remarked Violeta.

"You found the Red Wing then a merciless foe, it seems?" questioned Eve, turning her beautiful eyes upon the face of her scarcely less lovely companion.

"Yes; never did we have cause to dread the terrible craft; but see, I am now the more convinced the Red Wing. Although her top-masts seem far taller, and she is painted white, yet she has the same sharp bow, great breadth amidships, and lean stern, with the same low hull and tapering masts, as well as the great length of bowsprit that the Mexican had," continued Violeta, still keeping the glass to her eye.

"Why, lady, you are quite a sailor," remarked Colonel Moncrief, with surprised admiration.

"Yes, sir; my father is a yachtsman and I have passed much of my time in sailing with him," returned Violeta, and the ice of reserve having been broken between them the two dentmen and milkens soon became most friendly with each other.

"Well, captain, what do you make of the craft?" asked Don Guido, as the old seaman descended to the deck.
"It is the shadow schooner, sir."

"Captain, my daughter Violeta thinks she recognizes your old enemy the Red Wing."

"Ha, say you so? Why, lady, you are a better sailor than I am, for I now see the resemblance that tortured my mind when I first met the Flying Yankee."

"I see the craft was remined of me, for the cable is in the voice."

"I was in Havana, awaiting repairs to my vessel; not the Sea-Slipper, but a brig, that had been dismantled in a hurricane, and, hearing ill news from bome, had run before violent bound to New Orleans, and when three days out we were chased and overhauled by the Red Wing."

"The largest number of our passengers were women, and a number regarded for the safety of their friends below, the young pirate would not fire upon us, but ran the gantlet of our guns, boarded us, and captured the ship in ten minutes, although our crew numbered him two to one."

"Finding that the freight was owned by American merchants he would touch nothing, and after half an hour let the ship go on in peace."

"The schooner was as much like the Red Wing, and I would say it was that famous craft, had she not been said to have gone down in a gale."

The schooner was now hardly more than a mile distant by changing the route she had engaged off from the ship's course, and a nightfall coming on soon after, she disappeared from the sight of those on board the Sea-Slipper.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS PILOT.

As night came on the wind arose to a gale and the sea began to rear and toss, and, violently, as the Sea-Slipper, under close-reeded sails, flew on, her crew at their posts, and passengers, well wrapped up, huddled together upon the quarter-deck.

All regarding for the safety of the vessel, for each moment the storm swept on with greater force, and the British cruisers had so maneuvered that they had managed to get the advantage of the clipper, by heading her off and still keeping to seaward of her, and Captain Davenport began to dread the thought of having to put back before the storm and again seek the port from which he had sailed.

Upon his port-quarter was a low point of wooded land, jutting miles into the sea, which he had hoped to clear ere the cruisers had discovered his intention of running out of the way of the winds, but the heavy beat of the waves had so retarded his progress that when night came on, with its gloom and gale, he had not weathered the land.

"Conover, have you the bearing of that point of land?" asked Captain Davenport of his mate.

"Ay, ay, sir; it is just now off our port-quarter."

"Is that light not from some cabin on the land, for you know since the war broke out the lighthouse has not been kept?" and as Captain Davenport spoke he pointed ahead to a light but indistinctly seen through the haze.

"No, sir, that is a vessel."

"Then, by heaven, we are headed off—ha!"

As the captain spoke there suddenly shot up into the air a bright rocket, which lit up the gloom, and a large vessel-of-war was described not more than half a mile distant, and was the clipper.

"Stand ready all to wear ship!" suddenly cried the captain in ringing tones, and while the words were yet upon his lips there came an answering signal from the side of the clipper.

"By heaven! we are in for it now, with Britshers ahead, abeam and astern of us. That fellow on our port bow has just rounded the point of land yonder;" and Captain Davenport turned, for a moment not knowing what to do in the great danger that threatened him.

"They are all heavy vessels, captain, and we would be sunk by their metal. We attempt to run the gantlet," quietly remarked Colonel Moncrief.

"Yes, I fear we are dashed; but were there no passengers with us, captain, I would have kept on, to the land, and thus disappoint the English; but I cannot give up the ship yet."

"Are there no harbors upon the coast to which we can run?" asked Octa.

"Yes, there are several inlets off our starboard-beam, but we have no pilot, and it would be madness to make the attempt—Hal! what have we here? By art's gloriously a crew beaming on the bow."

"Clipper ship, ahoy!" suddenly pealed forth a ringing voice, that interrupted the words of Captain Davenport, and at the same moment there hovered the decks of the Sea-Slipper, clouds of snowy canvas, while the rush of the wind through cordage and rigging, sounded like the roar of the surf.

"The Flying Yankee! The Flying Yankee!" cried a dozen voices, while Captain Davenport in tones slightly tremulous, cried,

"Ahoy! the schooner; we are surrounded by British cruisers, and have but one chance of escape," cried the same ringing voice that had hailed, and which cut through the noise of the storm, although the schooner was a cable length distant. The route she had changed off from the ship's course, and a nightfall coming on soon after, she disappeared from the sight of those on board the Sea-Slipper.

The orders were clear; all on board heard them, and even the captain could say no word, his men sprang to obey. In a moment's time a lifeboat was lowered over the lee-quarter into the sea, having two battle-lanterns swung on spars in the stern and stern.

At the same instant the Sea-Slipper wore round quickly, in obedience to an order from Captain Davenport, and a moment after, was dashing along in the wake of the schooner, which had put about immediately upon seeing that the instructions given would be carried out.

Swiftly before the storm rushed the ship, leaving far behind the 'decor' that had left to British cruisers, which were gradually drawing toward a common center to hem in the American vessel that they were so anxious to make a prize.

In he mean time the carrying out of the Flying Yankee, for no longer was she covered with sail, but under close-reeded canvas, was hastening on toward the point of land, which, though not visible, was known to be but a few miles away.

Upon the clipper's decks was a scene of suppressed excitement for well each one knew their fate hung by a slender thread, and that capture, perhaps certain death stared them in the face. Glancing astern, as the ship bowed merrily along, Captain Davenport was delighted to observe, by the lights of the approaching cruisers, that they were drawing toward the spot where the life-boat had been left, with anchor attached to a heavy cable, thrown over to hold it steady, evidently believing the lights to be on the schooner, which was lying-to await their coming.

Thus they are fooled nicely, and will be as mad as a nest of hornets, when they arrive at the decy and find out their mistake," said the captain, speaking aloud the thoughts that were in every mind.

"Yes, as they have no windlass, and should it not, for devil would lead a saint astray," put in the mate, in a disconsolate tone, for he fully believed that the helm of the schooner was guided by his Satanic majesty.

"Conover, you are a fool."
"Yes, Captain Davenport," responded the mate.

"Yes for do you not see that the schooner is run by my hand?"

"No, I do not see anything of the kind; we saw that craft to-day, and then lost sight of her, I hoped forever; but here, in the midst of this storm, she sprung upon us, and we cannot get her under control for it is not in the power of man to resist the command of her skipper."

"Scripper! Who, in the devil's name, do you believe she is?" angrily asked the captain.

"You have named him, sir; yernder schooner is commanded by the evil one. Laugh if you will, but did you not see she was crowded with canvas when she first showed, and with her after deck looked, she was under bare poles almost; and yet flies away from the Sea-Slipper like a bird from a hound?"

"And see, yernder she goes, rushing right down upon a lee-shore, and the night as dark as a nigger's face, and here we go right on in her wake like—"

"Why, Mr. Conover, you seem to be very superstitions. Do you not know the Flying Yankee has proven the friend of Americans?" asked the mate muffled voice of Eve Davenport.

"Yes, miss, the devil is a friend to all sinners."

"You are inclined to be complimentary, Mr. Conover; but as your brain is working so hard, I must caution you not to do work for your hands to go forward and shake a rest out of the sails now set, for do you not see our pilot is dropping as rapidly as a star? and the captain spoke sternly, and in a manner that made the mate understand he desired no more croaking.

"Hal! they are letting out the secret on yernder old liner, for see, there go her signals to tell their command has flown," exclaimed Capt. Davenport, a moment after, as he saw a bright rocket soar heavenward from the deck of the frigate, that had approached near enough to the decoy to obtain position precisely.

"Yes, and I believe we will escape through the agency of our mysterious pilot—Hark!" and, as Col. Moncrief spoke, above the roar of the storm resounded a strain of marching, pealing, music sound, commingled, while from the forecastle rang the startling cry:

"Breake off your port hoy!"

"My God, have we followed to our ruin?" exclaimed the captain, springing to the wheel.

"Breake off! He star'ward hoy!"

"Where? Where is the schooner?"

"We are lost! Oh, Haven have mercy!"

The noise of the waves and the breasting force heard at the stern for supposition held control over the minds of the brave seamen, who now doubted not that they had been following a phantom ship with a phantom crew, and in dismay the captain knew not what course to pursue, when, suddenly, a lurid light burst forth like a meteor, dead ahead of the ship, and but a few cable-lengths distant, and the beautiful schooner, spectral in grace and appearance, was revealed, gliding along into a narrow gorge or inlet of the land, while upon either side toward wooded heights, whose base was washed by the wild waters that broke upon them and rebounded with terrific force and a wild roar.

"Behold the Flying Yankee is still our friend; she leads the way!" cried Col. Moncrief, with glad surprise, and every heart aboard the Sea-Slipper bound with joyful relief.

Still bondrous the lurid light on the schooner, shedding a bright glare over the waters through which the Sea-Slipper had yet to come, while the hull and rigging of the strange vessel appeared enveloped in the same misty cloud that seemed to hang around her in all her ocean wanderings.

Upon the decks of the Flying Yankee could be seen the band, white forms, with the mask of crimson, looking most weird-like and ghastly in the peculiar glare and the shadows of the overhanging cliffs; but undaunted, the brave commander of the Sea-Slipper stood on, with a perfect confidence in his guide, until his own vessel was overhanging the fore-and-aft banks of the inlet, which was hardly more than a hundred yards wide.

A few moments more of slow but steady sailing, and suddenly the high cliffs sloped away to a sandy beach, the channel rapidly widened, and again the Sea-Slipper was in the open waters, for she had been guided through an inlet that broke, river-like, across the narrow point of land which jutted from the main far out into the Gulf. Gently had the Sea-Slipper gained an offing from the inlet, when, with a blaze of blinding brilliancy, that lit up earth, sea, and sky, there came a sudden midnight gloom, and when the strained eyes of the captain reached their accustomed sight, the Flying Yankee had disappeared.

But she had guided the ship to safety, had saved those on board of her from capture, perhaps death, and with thankful hearts the crew spring to work, and soon the gallant barque was heading Gulfward, leaving far behind her the disappointed British cruisers, and the mysterious schooner that had been their savior.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE FOR THE PRIZE.

That all on board the Sea-Slipper was impressed by their mysterious deliverance from the English cruisers, was certain and a thorough feeling of superstition had taken possession of the crew.

Toward daylight on the day of the Sea-Slipper's escape, the gale blew itself out, settling down to a steady six-knot breeze, that drove the gallant vessel along rapidly toward the haven for which she was bound.

During the day the passengers spent most of their time on deck, and between Don Guido and Colonel Moncrief, Eve and Violeta, there sprang up a warm feeling of friendship.

The hours of sunlight passed swiftly by, and night, clear and starlit, settled upon the still restless waters, dotted only by the canvas of the Sea-Slipper.

"Sail, ho!"

Passengers and crew all started at the hail from the maintop, and listened attentively to the reply to Capt. Davenport's "Whereaway, and what do you make of her?"

"She is crossing our wake, sir; a brig-of-war, as well as I can make her out."

"Yes, I see her now; ho, aloft! turn your night-glass upon her, and report every movement."

"Ay, ay, sir; she has changed her course, and is in full chase of us," came the reply.

"All hands to crow sail! Let fall every rag that will catch a breath of wind. Into the rigging every mother's son of you, for see ye not there's a craft overhauling the Sea-Slipper?"

Roused by the energetic voice of their captain, the crew sprung into the rigging, and soon had every stitch of canvas that would draw set upon the ship.

"Now jump to the guns; double-shot all of them, and await my orders," again cried Capt. Davenport, as the crew descended to the deck. So quick had been the movements of the men, so rapid the orders, that the Sea-Slipper had been crowded with sail and her men were at quarters in ten minutes after the discovery of the vessel astern.

But in vain the endeavor of the ship to keep ahead of her pursuer, for steaming as she came on, following directly in the Sea-Slipper's foaming wake with the persistency of a dog on a trail.

"This will not do—she will run over us at this rate. All hands into the rigging!" suddenly yelled the captain, and turning to his mate, he continued:

"The Sea-Slipper must be put upon her best point of Sailing, Mr. Conover—directly before the wind—stand ready to obey."

A moment more and the orders rung out, clear and loud, and changing her course the gallant ship stood away before the breeze.

But all to no purpose, for the strange craft as quickly changed her course, and as silently and as
rapidly as before overhauled the Sea-Slipper, until but a hundred fathoms separated the two vessels.  
"That craft sails like the Flying Yankee, or—the devil!" cried Captain Davenport, and ere the words had left his lips there came a quick, stern hail:  
"Ahoy!"  
"Ahoy the brig!" answered Captain Davenport, after a moment's hesitation, for the speed of his pursuer filled him with the greatest surprise.  
"This ship, as you have already learned from Mobile harbor yesterday morning?" came the query.  
"Ay, ay, sir; the American clipper ship Sea-Slipper, bound from Mobile to Havana—John Davenport commander," replied the captain, with seamanship-like precision.  
"All right! Captain Davenport, there are two British men-of-war, a ship of the line and a sloop-of-war lying in wait for you to the southward, so I advise you to head for the eastward and shape your course as far out in the Gulf as possible. Good-night, sir."  
"Thank you, sir! What brig is that?" answered the captain, but no reply came, as the commander of the brig was heard giving a few quick orders, while the vessel came closer up into the wind, shook out more sails, and rapidly gilded ahead.  
"That's the brig that just sailed Captain Davenport; but silence followed his words, and in a few minutes more the two vessels were a long way apart, the merchantman standing a little more to the westward while the sensation of windward dashed away on a southerly course.  
"Well, if my late experience at sea is not a marvel, may I never get into port! First, we are overhauling a schooner that sails like the wind, and may have, for all I know, connection with the devil; then a brig-of-war pursues, overtakes and passes the Sea-Slipper as though she were a lugger and not the fleetest clipper ship afloat, and with a puzzled face, I report paced to and fro.  
"You need not feel hurt, captain, because the Sea-Slipper could not keep ahead of yonder craft, for she is one of the fleetest war-vessels in the American navy," said Colonel Moncrief, who with Eve upon his arm had narrowly eyed the brig.  
"I should say so; you know her then, colonel?"  
"Yes; it was the American brig-of-war Vulture."  
"But, of the captain, we will not speak more, for a painful memory to me, and to Miss Eledred here, hanes over the history of yonder vessel-of-war," said Colonel Moncrief, with deep feeling.  
"Your pardon, colonel; I now recall one of your name who was an officer on board her. Believe me I had no intention to wound—"  
"Well I know that, captain; he of whom you speak was my son but we will now let the past bury its dead," and turning quietly, Colonel Moncrief walked away, leaving the captain pained at thought that he had unintentionally wounded the feelings of two of his passengers.  
An hour passed, and nowhere over the waters was a sail visible, for the brig had disappeared in a haze over the sea to windward.  
Tired at length with their stay upon deck, the Sea-Slipper's passengers were about to retire to their cabin, when the deck's converse was again heard from aloft, and from a heavy bank of fog that had drifted down from windward, came the tall masts and large hull of a line-of-battle ship.  
"Is that a man," as I breathe, is another one! Why, the Britishers are as thick in these waters as half-breeds in Mexico; but we are bowling mercifully along and living on deck, as we were in oldiltage, ranging furnaces, burning frigates, thence to the aid of the brig.  
The light from the burning vessel made the sea as bright as noontide, and those on board the Sea-Slipper saw several boats leave the unfortunate gun from each of the new-comers, they squared away in full stern chase.  
Thus the hours passed, the clipper steadily gaining, and Captain Davenport was congratulating himself upon his escape, when an unlucky shot from the bow of the leading frigate carried away his bowsprit close to the deck, and another shot from the other shattered the wheel to atoms, killing the men that held it, and slightly wounding the mate.  
Instantly the ship veered off Mobile harbor course, and her bows swung round into the wind.  
"By Heaven! these wounds are mortal to the good ship now; hit fore and aft: at the same time."  
"Here, men, remember it; and then take in sail; for the Sea-Slipper has lost her heel and toe, and we are in for it," called out the captain.  
Alarmed by the confusion on deck the passengers the next moment rushed from the cabin, to behold with dismay two large English frigates rushing down upon their prey.  
"Had what we there?" exclaimed the unfortunate captain, as there suddenly came a flash of flame, a roar, and from the course in which they had been sailing before brought to by the unlucky shots.  
The American brig? Three cheers, my men; and now, there's cheer for more; for here is her comrade, a full- hulled frigate in her wake! Now, my British bull-dogs, you will have to fight for your bone!" cried the captain of the Sea-Slipper, almost before himself.  
Climbing up windward on short and rapid tacks, the brig and frigate suddenly appearing upon the scene, were opening merily from their guns upon the two English line-of-battle ships that had been hailing down upon the prize until warned of danger by a shot from the brig.  
Instantly calling their entire crews to quarters, they reduced sail, and boldly advanced to meet their enemies, who, though much inferior in size, were at least strong enough to give them considerable hard work to gain over them a victory.  
Drifting slowly away to leeward, the Sea-Slipper was thus out of immediate range of the fire, and her decks were crowded with her crew and passengers, eagerly watching the sea combat, and praying for success to fall upon the two plucky American vessels.  
``Such moments of respite carried a most terrible; the guns flashed more rapidly and with more ominous roar; the shot shrieked-exultantly through the air and the crash of timbers, the cries of the combatants, the groans of the wounded, as the contest became closer and more desperate.  
In dismay, infolded in each other's arms, with Don Guido and Colonel Moncrief grasping the hand of each, Violeta and Eve stood gazing in silence upon the awful scene, sublime in its terror, while near stood Captain Davenport, eagerly watching every move of the combatants.  
"Fellow! the smaller frigate is on fire!" suddenly cried Don Guido, and as he spoke, flame burst up from the decks of one of the English vessels, sending a lurid glare over the water, while she lay a helpless mass upon the sea, burning and filling at the mercy of the wind for her helmsman had deserted his post.  
But, undismayed by the fate of its comrades, the other sea-warrior still continued the battle, pouring renewed fire upon the brig, which had drawn quite near her, and then above the roar of all noises another cry:  
"The brig! the brig is got! g down!"  
It was too true; the brig was indeed sinking, but as her crew were boldly firing her guns,  
"Man the boats, men! We must not idly look on while there is lives to save!" cried Captain Davenport, and a few moments after five boats left the side of the Sea-Slipper, to be heard no more, while the burning frigate, three went to the aid of the brig.  
The light from the burning vessel made the sea as bright as noontide, and those on board the Sea-Slipper saw several boats leave the unfortunate
ship and row toward the other Englishman, which still fought her remaining American adversary with the strongest determination; also they saw the brig sink lower and lower, until, with a mighty plunge, she sunk beneath the waters, leaving her crew stranded in the mad vortex.

Anxiously all watched the return of the boats, crowded with the survivors, and then their eyes once more sought the burning frigate, which, enveloped in flames, was slowly borne away before the wind, her heated guns ever and anon pouring forth their mournful notes of woe, as they mingled with the fierce notes of the still-battling American and English frigates.

Hardly had the boats returned, bringing with them all the survivors of the brig, and those from the burning ship who had not gone aboard the frigate, when a sudden silence was wrought into the noise of battle, and caused the sea to fairly quake with the concussion, the gallant frigate, still wrapped in fiery splendor, was blown into atoms, and for an instant only the sudden plunge of heavy timbers, the cannon, and mayhap human forms, was heard, and then the silence of death reigned.

Boon! boon! crash! crash! and again the battle was opened. The American was resuming the combat with greater earnestness, as if to avenge the loss of the brig, while, doubtless with the same motive for vengeance, the English man-of-war once more directed both and again the flashes of the broadsides illumine the sea.

CHAPTER XX.

AN ENGAGEMENT OF THE FLYING YANKEE.

Frenzer and flarer grew the combat; louder and louder roared the guns; wilder and wilder resounded the cheers of the American and English crews as the contest continued, and the cheers in the decks of the Sea-Slipper feared the two frigates would bodily sink each other, ere either one would strike his colors; but no, the American vessel, smaller in size as well as weaker in guns and men, at length was observed to become unmanageable, and the next moment fell off so that her powerful adversary raked her decks from stern to bow.

A few murderous discharges from the guns of the Englishman, and then, in loud tones, came the call:

"Do you strike?"

"We are helpless—I surrender the ship!" answered a seaman-like voice from the American's deck. And louder and louder rose the cheers and shouts from the decks of the Sea-Slipper. The cheer that suddenly turned into a wall—a cry, loud orders, a clash of small-arms, as suddenly as the crash of the sulphur-stocks of combat appeared the shadowy outlines of a vessel, that with wondrous skill was brought along side the hull of the victorious frigate, and more than a hundred white forms clambered upon her blood-stained deck.

Taken by surprise, unable to account for the sudden and mysterious appearance of the schooner, and believing wholly in the supernatural, the frigate's crew was driven pell-mell across the decks to their death. But the strongest resistance was offered to their strange foes, who were headed by a tall form, armed with sword and pistols, that dealt death mercilessly around him.

"Out, on! my men! Cut down every last vestige of English tendency. This is the Amerigo, the leader. In an instant, and once more he sprung into the midst of the English crew, who had now begun to rally beneath the orders of their officers.

But vain their resistance, for, unable to withstand the terrible onslaught, they were driven aft to the quarter-deck, their own guns were turned upon them, and at length the brave captain, who, a few moments earlier, was demanding the surrender of a conquered enemy, was compelled to haul down his ensign to a man that had vanquished him upon his own decks!

Sir Edgar De Lacey, and this is his British majesty's line-of-battle-ship Pocahontas. To whom do I surrender my sword, sir?" said the vanquished Englishman, stepping forward, and gazing upon the crimson-masked face of the conqueror.

The victor tried to speak, his hand was outstretched, but, with a low moan, he staggered forward, and would have fallen had not the man in the arms of Commodore Cutting, who had that moment come on board from his ship, to see the cause of disturbance on the Englishman.

"God above! Noel he seemed to say, as he gazed at the astonished commodore, as he tore the mask from the face of the wounded man and recognized the fainting form in his arms. At the request of the English officer he bore Noel into the cabin and laid him upon a lounge, when the surgeon was summoned to attend him, for he was wounded severely in the side.

The next moment Lieutenant Muriel dashed into the cabin, exclaiming:

"What! Captain Noel dead?"

"No; he is severely wounded; are you his lieutenant?" answered Sir Edgar De Lacey.

"I am, sir; you will surrender your sword to me, if you please," haughtily but politely returned the young Spaniard, as he removed from his face its silken covering.

"May I ask the name of your schooner and the commander that has taken our ship?"

"Certainly, sir; it is the craft known as the Flying Yankee, and this gentleman lying here is Captain Noel, the commander."

With a word the English officer surrendered his sword, which Muriel immediately returned to its owner with a light compliment; and then, turning to Commodore Cutting, who stood near, said:

"Believe you are the commanding officer of the squadron that engaged this vessel?"

"I am Commodore Cutting, sir, and the frigate alongside is my flag-ship.

"You will then see it is not enough to take command of this prize, and with your permission I will remove Captain Noel to his own vessel, and depart."

"Not so fast, young man, for this gentleman is too seriously wounded to be moved, and besides he shall no longer dodge the reward of his numerous gallant services to his government, now that it is known that Noel Moncrief and the commander of the famous Flying Yankee are one and the same."

"Yes, Commodore Cutting, I am Noel Moncrief, the Ocean Rover," suddenly broke in the stern voice of the wounded man, and turning quickly at the words, all behold that he had recovered from his unconsciousness and was gazing the American commodore firmly in the face.

"My noble boy! Gladly do I welcome you back into the service of your country—" said Commodore Cutting, and the young man clasped both hands to the heart of the commodore of the desperate combat with our brave foe here."

"God, again I thank thee!" once more murmured the now happy man.

Resuming to the English commander and Hernando Muriel to follow him, Commodore Cutting ascended to the deck and gave orders for the disposition of the English crews and care of the wounded; after which he went down to Sir Edgar De Lacey and the young Spaniard the strange story of Noel Moncrief's life, a story which the young lieutenant of the Flying Yankee heard for the first time.

"His life indeed has been a strange romance, and of an interesting and I now wonder not at his earnest desire to remain incognito, though serving America with wonderful skill and energy," remarked
The Flying Yankee.

The English nobleman, who, then turning suddenly toward Muriel, continued: "Lieutenant, the career of your vessel has been overhung with mystery, and if not asking too much I would beg you to answer a few ral puzzling questions."

"Explain, may it please you, how it was you made even educated minds believe in a supernatural agency ruling the destiny of your beautiful craft," said Commodore Cutting, with interest, gazing into the face of the young officer.

"Assuredly gentlemen, I will explain, for mystery with us now is at an end.

"The craft lying there, and known as the Flying Yankee, now once the schooner, Red Wing---"

"Ha! the resemblance between the two is now disclosed!" exclaimed Commodore Cutting.

"Yes, sir; the Red Wing of the Mexican service formerly, and the Flying Yankee are the same schooner, which, when Captain Noel—Moncrief, I believe, is his true name—resigned from the service of the Mexicans, he metamorphosed into the present weird-looking craft, which he at once ran under his private colors, and made war upon England."

But the mystery of his being able to carry his poles enveloped in canvas sufficient to run under a sail, still remains to elucidate the cause, lieutenant," and the Englishman seemed deeply interested.

"That is easy of explanation, sir, and I will give you ocular demonstration of the circumstance, as it now is. Here, see the Flying Yankee!" and the clear voice of the young officer rung out sharp in the crisp morning.

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered the voice of Mr. Hart from the schooner, which was lying to, a cable's length from the frigate.

"Get out your mask sails on the schooner."

"Ay, ay, sir!" came the response, and almost immediately a perfect network of sails was put upon the schooner, so closely woven as at a short distance to resemble real canvas.

"I see, I see! Remarkable indeed, Lieutenant, your commander is a wonderful man."

"So we, sir, and the Flying Yankee, modestly replied Muriel, while the American commodore put in:"

"But the smoke and spectral light that always hung about your craft when seen either by night or day."

"Easily explained, commodore. We were in the habit of burning bright lights that cast a reflection through colored glass, and the smoke we manufactured was then placed in iron vessels on various parts of the decks. These tricks, added to our network sails, the wonderful speed of the schooner, our men clothed in white, and with their faces hidden by the masks, rendered us, doubtless, a most spectral craft and crew," and the young Spaniard laughed lightly.

"Indeed it did, and for one am glad to know the secret, and truly glad to welcome back to the navy Noel Moncrief, who shall command our schooner, if he recover, and God grant he may, with his brave men, and no longer be an ocean rover, but an honored officer of the United States navy. But Time flies, and there is much for us to do, so, Sir Edgar, you will retain command of your vessel, temporarily repairing damages, and following me back to Mobile, to the Flying Yankee, under command of her gallant lieutenant here, must lead the way."

"A few ours more, the four vessels, with the Flying Yankee leading, the Sea-Slipper in her wake, and red and blue flags following the Flying Yankee, under command of her gallant lieutenant here, must lead the way."

Shortly after the anchors had been let fall, Noel Moncrief was conveyed on board the Flying Yankee and addressed the crew. The commodore was awaiting the coming of visitors, for Commodore Cutting had sent him word that he would come to see him, bringing with him those whom the wounded officer would dearly love to see.

Need I dwell upon the meeting between father and son—the meeting between Noel and Eve Eldred—the meeting between the wond—well, how shall I say Commodore Cutting, Aiden Ainslie and Calvin Bernard—the surprise and delighted welcome of Don Guido and the lovely Violeta?

"Kind reader, let me draw a vail over that scene of joy, and hasten on to a denouncement of strange and startling interest, that took place there in that cabin, when Don Guido and Lieutenant Muriel met face to face. Years ago, more—Don Muriel, the father of the young lieutenant, had fallen in a duel with, and by the hand of, Don Octavio; and yet, when their children grew to man's and woman's estate, Hernando and Violeta were to love each other, and the son of Don Octavio and brother of Violeta called it, Muriel was challenged by the young Octavio, who determined to make him answer with his life for daring to love his sister.

They met; Muriel slew the brother of Violeta, and, realizing fully his banishment from her presence, he fled from his native land, to become a buccaneer, until the offer of moncrief made him an officer, fighting beneath the Mexican flag.

"Remember, well the circumstances that caused Muriel to fly from his native land, both Don Octavio and Violeta, in search of danger, and though both became famous for their valor and courage; they received the thought only of the noble qualities of the young man, and received him once more into their affections.

"Through the instrumentality of Commodore Cutting, a pardon was readily obtained for Noel, for the crime of slaying his superior officer, and also for Westley North, in consideration of the valuable services he had rendered to the government and country of the United States.

"Having recovered from his wound, Noel once again assumed command, with the rank of captain of the Flying Yankee, which, with her old officers and crew upon her decks, spread her wings and flew away in search of new dangers, until the close of hostilities between the United States and England caused her sharp prow to be turned homeward, where Noel Moncrief and Muriel Mendez, the real name of the young Spaniard, found a warm welcome awaiting them from Eve and Violeta, whom shortly after they led to the altar, to be irrevocably bound together in the sacred bonds of matrimony.

"As for the Flying Yankee, she became a pleasure yacht, Noel having converted her to such, appointing Westley North her commander, and her several officers consisting in the young sailor, Nice, the beautiful wife and Co one Moncrief, to Cuba, to pass a part of the cold winters at the magnificent plantation home of Don Muriel Mendez and Violeta, while, at the commencement of the warm summer days, the fleet craft would have as passengers northward bound, her former lieutenant, his Cuban bride, and Don Octavio.

Then in the old baronial halls of Moncrief Manor were wont to gather merry parties, among whom, outside the family circle were recognizable Commodore Cutting, Aiden Ainslie, and Calvin Bernard, all of whom rejoiced in the happiness of their old shipmates.

One other was there also, who was wont, once a year, to visit Moncrief Mansion and pass a few days—a mild-faced man, upon whom the seal of sorrow had fallen with heavier weight and the day after dropped anchor off the city of Mobile. Shortly after the anchors had been let fall, Noel Moncrief was conveyed on board the Flying Yankee and addressed the crew. The commodore was awaiting the coming of visitors, for Commodore Cutting had sent him word that he would come to see him, bringing with him those whom the wounded officer would dearly love to see.

"That man was Clarence Moncrief, wearing the robes of a Catholic priest, who, having banished himself from the world, and forgiven his brother with the Christian spirit, found not as serious a condition for himself to a life of toil and privation, this greatest joy being his yearly visit to the home of his boyhood, where he was wont to pass the greater part of his time in rambling amid the forest trees, with the children of Noel and Eve his constant companions.

THE END.
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