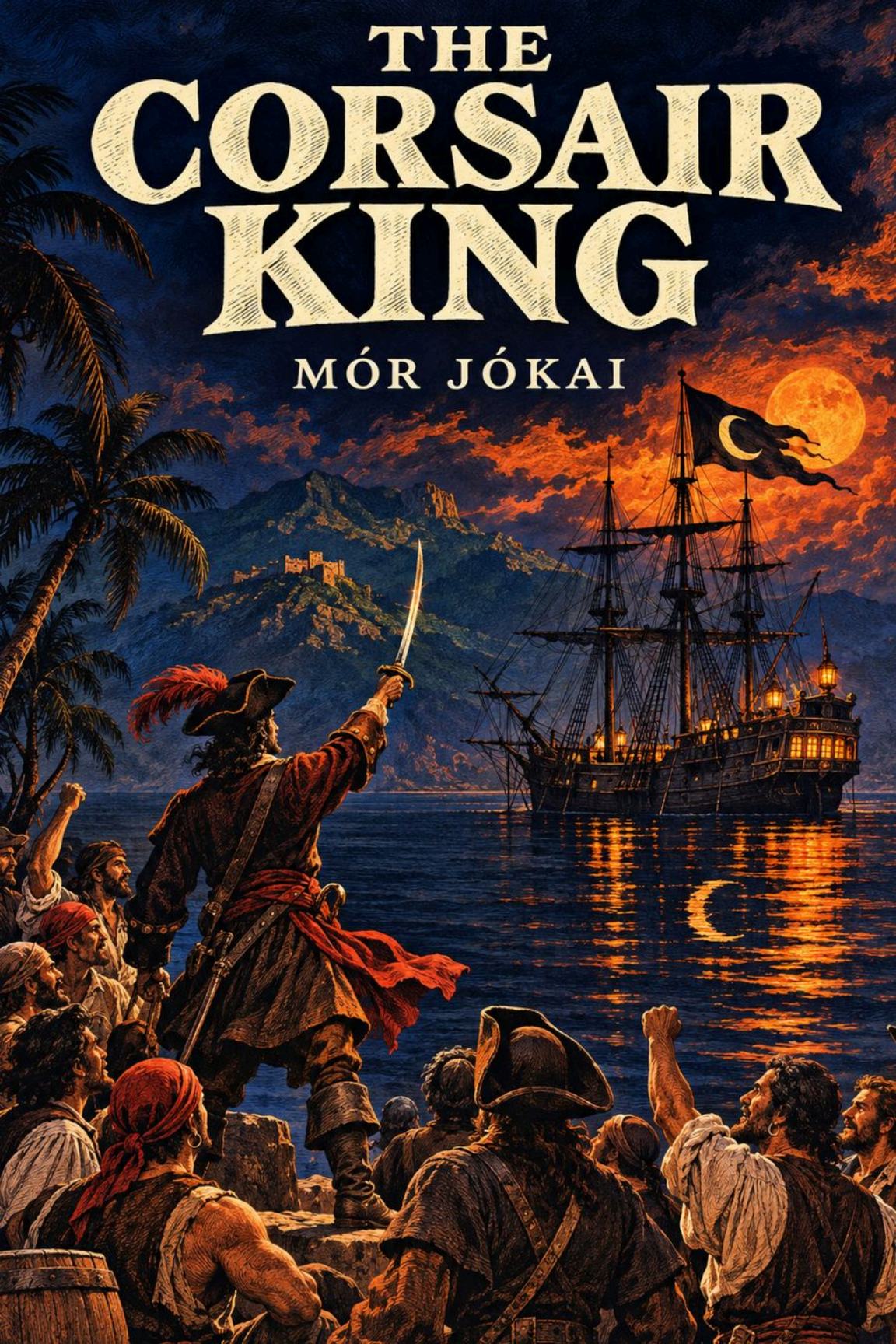
THE CORSAIR KING

MÓR JÓKAI



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Mór Jókai

Translated by Mary J. Safford

THE AUTHOR



Mór Jókai

1825–1904

Illustration after the 1890s portrait in the Petőfi Literary Museum.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mór Jókai

Mór Jókai was a Hungarian novelist, journalist and public figure. Adventure and historical change often meet in his fiction. Here a crew elects Robert Barthelemy as its leader, and his voyages lead him toward Hispaniola and a private reckoning. Mary J. Safford translated the novel for American readers.

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

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Contents

Page references are to the historical printing.

CHAPTER PAGE

I. Choosing a King 11

II. In Hispaniola 50

III. Revenge 149

IV. Retribution 187

Chapter I

Choosing a King

The storm had spent itself, the sea was calm again, and on its smooth surface tossed empty casks and shattered masts,—the monuments of shipwrecked vessels. The stormy petrels had vanished with the tempest, and the flying fish were now making their clumsy leaps from wave to wave,—a sign of fair weather. A brigantine which had outlived the gale was moving slowly over the almost unrippled surface of the water; all hands were engaged in repairing the damage occasioned by the storm; temporary masts were rigged, sails trimmed, the crew worked fairly hanging in the air; for the ship had heeled far over,—a proof that her ballast had shifted during the tempest.

With the exception of the blows of the carpenter's hammer, and the creaking of the pumps, nothing was heard save the voice of the captain, who stood leaning against the mainmast trying to ascertain on a chart the place to which he had been driven by the storm. The movements of the needle were scrutinized more and more carefully, while from time to time, the voice of an officer taking soundings, echoed on the air. At last the captain's finger stopped on a group of islands and he said quietly: "We are off the Ladrones." At the same moment a sailor on the mast-head shouted: "Land!" Without the slightest change of expression, the captain repeated: "The Ladrones."

Then, folding the chart, he took out a small silver whistle and, blowing a signal, ordered the mate to summon the crew to investigate the occurrences of the preceding night.

The Isles of Thieves were but a few miles distant, they had no cannon, their sails were tattered, yet the captain spoke as calmly in passing sentence upon his men as though he were sitting in the utmost security upon a jury bench.

"By whose directions were the sick thrown overboard?" he asked, turning his stern face toward the crew.

"The doctor ordered it," replied an old seaman.

"You, Scudamore?" inquired the captain, wheeling round to look a tall thin man in the face.

The latter's countenance was one of those which, at the first glance, appear smooth and gentle, whose features when smiling are even captivating, until some expression of mockery or greed of vengeance suddenly transforms the winning glance into an image of horror.

"You gave the order yourself, Captain Rolls," replied the surgeon, with a smiling face, and in a tone of marked gentleness, as if the subject under discussion were some very noble deed, which he declined to acknowledge merely from exaggerated modesty. "When the ship sprung a leak, you commanded that all the superfluous ballast should be thrown overboard. The men first cast out the heavy ballast; then you ordered them to add whatever else could be spared. Then the cannon went, though it was a great pity, for we stand in need of them, especially when off the Ladrones, but even this did not lighten the ship sufficiently. You again issued orders that everything superfluous must be cast into the sea. There was nothing left which could be dispensed with except the bars of silver and the sick. The crew began to discuss which should be thrown overboard. I answered: 'We shall not be asked for the *men* when we reach London, but we shall be for the silver;' and, by my advice, the silver was saved and the ship weathered the storm."

"Dr. Scudamore," said the captain, with cool deliberation, "for this inhuman deed you will be cashiered, kept in irons until we reach London, and there delivered up to justice."

"Sail in sight!" shouted the man at the helm, and several of the crew whispered in terror; "Pirates!"

Scudamore fixed his green-gray eyes on the captain and, smiling contemptuously, said in tones which had suddenly grown hoarse.

"I think it might be advisable to defer my punishment a few hours; you or some one else might need my services during the interval."

"That is no affair of yours," returned the captain. "To die without a doctor or to be thrown into the sea by his orders is much the same thing."

"Ha! ha! ha! You see, it might have been better for you in the end, had you relieved the ship of the sick in the first place, instead of throwing your guns overboard. But that's *your* affair."

Captain Rolls silently nodded to the men to take the doctor below. Then he gave orders that the bars of silver should be concealed in the hold, and that every man should go to his post to be prepared for any attack. He himself, taking his weapons, went to his usual station and, without changing the vessel's course in the least, ordered all sail to be set.

Meanwhile the pirate craft was dashing toward the brigantine. The black flag was already visible, and a cannon ball, whistling close by the brigantine's rigging, was the first message from the sea-robber.

Captain Rolls had no cannon with which to answer. The silence was interpreted by the pirates as fear, and one of their number shouted in a tone of thunder through his speaking trumpet:

"Ship ahoy! A word with the captain."

Instantly a battle-flag fluttered from every mast-head on the brigantine.

A terrible uproar arose on the pirate ship; a tall man, with a gray vest, girdled by a scarlet sash, appeared on deck, issuing orders in loud, hoarse tones, upon which half the sails were furled, and with a swift turn the light craft came round before the wind close by the brigantine, without firing a shot, evidently considering her a sure prey, which must be spared from harm.

On the pirate's prow was carved a strange human figure, the symbol of the ship's name, The Sea Devil, and, which, the pirates

humorously asserted, was the living image of their Captain Davis, whose face had been so disfigured by the bursting of a shell that it resembled a death's head.

The pirates dashed with Satanic recklessness toward the brigantine, whose defenders still awaited them in motionless silence. But just at the moment the grappling irons were thrown, Rolls made a sign, and the thunder of the report of the sailors' arms followed; when the smoke dispersed, the two vessels were already fast locked together, the fire had killed several of the pirates; the others, pushing their comrades' bodies aside, were trying to climb to the brigantine's deck. In an instant the two crews were fighting man to man with sabres and knives. One furiously attacked, the other coolly defended; neither feared wounds or weapons.

The sailors fought bravely. Captain Rolls remained in his place, with his eyes fixed on the pirate leader, who had already fired at him three times without making his foe even turn his head.

"I'll see whether you are the devil or I!" Davis at last shouted savagely. "Follow me, you scoundrels," and seizing his sabre between his teeth, while swinging a huge hammer above his head with his right hand, he sprang on the deck of the brigantine, felling two of her crew at the same instant. The pirates, with deafening yells, rushed into the breach thus made, and the terrified sailors began to yield, more alarmed by the hideous face of the pirate leader than by the weight of his blows.

Rolls quietly drew a pistol from his belt. "You won't hit me!" yelled Davis, gnashing his teeth and trying to startle the captain by rolling his eye-balls hideously. The latter fired, and whoever was looking at Davis at the moment saw a bloody star on his forehead where the bullet entered. The pirate suddenly grasped the handle of his hammer with both hands and sank lifeless.

Bewildered by the loss of their leader, the corsairs were on the point of yielding their vantage ground, when one of their number shouted triumphantly: "Hurrah, Barthelemy!" and at that moment a fierce yell arose from the center of the brigantine. While the fight

had been raging on one side, six pirates in a boat had rowed around her and crept noiselessly to her deck, which they reached just as their captain fell. These men, too, turned to fly, but one of their number, a young, slender fellow, with a bronzed face, thick curling locks, and sparkling eyes, sprang behind Rolls, and, pinioning his arms, wrested his pistol from his hold and forced him to his knees.

"Let no one stir or you are all dead men!" shouted the young pirate in bold, ringing tones, and the sailors, disheartened by the capture of their commander, laid down their arms before the savage forms thronging on deck.

The victory was Barthelemy's; and his comrades' first act was to lift him on their shoulders, declare him their captain and, with terrible oaths, swear eternal fealty by death, hell, and the devil.

A Herculean fellow raised him aloft like a child, and, pointing to the figures lying weltering in their blood, shouted in a voice of thunder:

"Who deserves to be your leader better than Robert Barthelemy?"

"No one! No one!" was the unanimous answer.

"Will you have him for your leader, captain, king?"

"Hurrah!" responded the crew.

"Stop!" cried Barthelemy from the Hercules' shoulder. "I heard some one shout 'No.'"

"Who was it?" roared the athlete; "does any one want to jest with death?"

"Don't rage, Skyrme, don't rage, my brave giant. Speech is free. Come forward, Lord Simpson, you oppose my election. Step forward, my valiant nobleman, and tell us your objection to me!"

The pirates, amid rude laughter, pushed before Barthelemy a tall, fair man, who, with his hands thrust into his pockets, eyed the new captain scornfully from head to foot.

"Speak fair, noble lord!" said Skyrme, raising his sinewy hand, threateningly above Simpson's head, "or you'll bite your own tongue."

"I should do that without your telling me," replied Simpson, nonchalantly, glancing at his comrades. "You know that my father was Lord Simpson?"

"Of course we do!" shouted the others.

"My father was the sworn foe of Jeffreys, who, after Monmouth's fall, brought the brave English Protestant nobles to the scaffold. My father suffered with them. Since that time I have hated the Papists, and do not want one even for a pirate chief. Not even you, Barthelemy, for you are a Papist."

Instead of breaking the speaker's head, Skyrme raised him on his arm and, amid the loud laughter of the pirates, drew him toward Barthelemy, with whom he drained the cup of friendship, after Barthelemy had assured him, on his honor as a pirate, that he had not entered a church since his christening, and had never been in a priest's presence during his entire life. The new captain was then formally given the leader's cap with its scarlet plume, and the whole band then proceeded to the work of distributing the booty.

Barthelemy sat on a cask turned upside down, holding on his knees a black book in which were written in red letters the names of the pirates, and read them one by one in a loud tone. Often nobody answered and, at the end of a long pause, some one growled: "Dead," and the name was instantly erased from the list.

Just then a pirate brought Captain Rolls, who had been bound hand and foot, to the mainmast, where he laid him flat on the deck. Barthelemy raised his hat with the utmost courtesy.

"Pardon me, captain, that my men have placed you in so uncomfortable a position. You are a brave soldier and fought well. Unbind this worthy man."

"His hands too?" asked a pirate, casting a doubtful glance at his leader from under his shaggy brows.

"Yes, Asphlant, especially if the captain will promise to do nothing against us."

"I'll promise nothing," replied Rolls.

"Well, no matter; I told you to unbind his hands at any rate, it will be our business to see that he doesn't break anybody's head. And now, captain, be kind enough to declare the contents of your vessel, which you have so bravely defended. No doubt you have a valuable cargo."

"You have captured the ship, and can search every corner of her, I shall guide you nowhere."

"Right again. Men, go below."

The pirates instantly leaped down the hatchways and, after spending an hour in rummaging through every part of the ship, they returned to Barthelemy with the sorrowful tidings that there was nothing in the whole vessel except a cask of biscuit and one of water.

Rolls could not help smiling at the fury of the disappointed men.

"You could see that I had no guns, and therefore might have inferred that, if I had been in such straits that I was forced to throw them overboard, there would be no other ballast in the ship."

"Devil take it!" roared Asphlant, throwing his cap on the deck, "have so many brave fellows eaten lead and drunk salt water for the sake of an empty box, full of rats? you are a cheat, captain. What had you to defend in this ship?"

"My honor," replied Rolls proudly.

"Which, when we have taken it from you, will be of no use to us," said the giant Skyrme, laughing. "What do you say to that, Moody?"

The man addressed was a sullen, taciturn fellow, who was sitting on the bulwark, holding a short pipe between his teeth. The silver whistle hanging from his button-hole indicated that he was the pirate's boatswain.

"What's the use of so much talk?" he rejoined. "Bore a hole in the bottom of the ark and let the whole crew go under water with her."

"For heaven's sake, gentlemen!" shrieked a voice among the captured sailors, and a man, with his hands tied behind his back, threw himself at Barthelemy's feet and tried to kiss his boots, while his eyes rested despairingly on the face of the pirate chief.

"For heaven's sake, you brave, valiant, worthy men! You heroes, you demi-gods! By heaven, hell, and all that is sacred to you, I beseech you not to murder me. Kill all my comrades, the scoundrels deserve it for resisting you; but I have given you no offence, I never held a weapon in my hand; I was imprisoned during the whole fight and have just been brought out by these brave, excellent men."

Some of the pirates stared, others laughed.

"Gentleman, renowned heroes, worshipped sovereigns of our age, hear me, I entreat you, by all you hold sacred. I am Dr. Scudamore, a persecuted man; persecuted as you are; I have nothing to do with these people; I am the mortal enemy of Captain Rolls. I implore you to distinguish between me and these people, not to condemn me with them. Oh, I beg you to be merciful and permit me, kissing the dust off your feet, to consider myself the humblest of your servants."

Skyrme averted his face with an expression of loathing, while Moody kicked at the writhing figure, whom every one was eyeing with the deepest scorn.

"Captain Rolls," said Barthelemy, "it appears that you have condemned this fellow?"

"Only accused, not condemned. The judgment lies with the English courts."

"Oh, we won't go so far," said Skyrme with a look of amusement; "make the charge; we'll represent the court of justice. Barthelemy will be judge, we the sheriffs and constables. Bring forward the complaint, the court is open."

Rolls coldly averted his eyes without answering a syllable.

Scudamore, who was scanning every face with the crafty glance of a man who fears for his life, hastily interposed.

"You see, gentlemen, you see the contemptuous face with which he receives your offer, you see how proudly, how scornfully he looks down upon you, as if it would be a disgrace to him to recognize such worthy men as judges. Oh, *I* will submit to your sentence, I have no desire to stand before wiser, more just or more distinguished judges. I will tell with my own lips everything of which I am accused."

"I forbid you to do so!" cried Rolls vehemently.

"There, you see for yourselves, gentlemen. He wants to command here still, here, where you are the rightful possessors. He will not even permit me to repeat the charge against me! Very natural! He knows that he, and not I, will be condemned. So listen, gentlemen, listen, for what I have to tell is an important matter; my crime is that we were bringing huge bars of silver—"

"Ho! ho! that begins well," shouted Asphlant, craning his neck to hear better.

"On the way a storm rose, the ship sprung a leak, and the captain ordered all useless ballast to be thrown overboard. There was nothing left except the sick and the silver, and the question was which should be cast into the sea?"

"Well, and you, as the doctor, of course kept the sick," said Skyrme.

"No indeed, I kept the silver, and now Captain Rolls wants to punish me for it."

Barthelemy turned from the man in horror, while Rolls glared at him with blazing eyes.

"Oho, captain," cried Asphlant, "so there is silver on your ship! Where did you hide it, eh?"

"That I will not tell you."

"You won't? Oh, the thumb screw will find out. Here, ropes, ropes!"

"What do you mean?" cried Barthelemy, boldly surveying his companions. "Are we members of the Inquisition, that we seek to learn truth by torture? No, my friends; let no one have the right to say that the pirates use the tools of the auto-da-fé! Should not we, who call ourselves the heroes of the free sea, honor freedom? If Captain Rolls will not reveal the hiding-place in his vessel we will take her into port, pull every plank apart, and find the silver without committing a deed which would dishonor us."

The pirates cheered their captain's speech, and began to fasten the brigantine to their ship.

Scudamore, who had refrained from disclosing the hiding-place merely that the pirates might wreak their vengeance on Captain Rolls, now, perceiving that the latter had escaped, said:

"Don't trouble yourselves, gentlemen. Why should you drag this miserable craft after you? Release me and promise to spare my life, and I'll take you to the spot where the silver is hidden."

"Loose the doctor's hands from the irons," said Barthelemy signing to his men. "I'll promise that we will not harm a hair of your head. Show us the hiding-place."

Scudamore, finding his hands at liberty, tried to shake hands with each one of the pirates in turn, but they angrily pushed him back.

"Hurry up!" cried Asphlant, dealing him a blow, while another pirate, grasping him with both hands, dragged him along, Scudamore protesting that he should feel under obligations to the whole company as long as he lived.

The pirates soon returned, exultingly bearing the chests of silver on their shoulders. Barthelemy ordered them to be placed on board their own vessel, while Scudamore showed the utmost zeal in helping the men, calling each, meanwhile, his dear, kind friend, a compliment which they repaid with all sorts of abusive epithets and the command not to touch their property.

The last to come on deck was Asphlant, who said with great satisfaction: "We shall leave nothing here, captain! The ship is entirely empty. Shall we bore a hole in her bottom? Or will it be better to hang these fellows in a row on the mainyard, and let the vessel drift where she likes?"

The loud laughter of the pirates showed their cordial approval of this proposal. The sailors gave no sign of emotion, while Scudamore tried to lock arms with one after another of the pirates, constantly asserting that he had nothing to do with the other party.

"Silence!" ordered Barthelemy sternly. "You will neither scuttle the ship nor hang the crew. That might do for miserable Spanish privateers, pitiful Tunisian cut-throats, but not for us, Englishmen and Frenchmen. Are we to make ourselves ashamed of the name of pirate, admit that it has nothing in common with the word honor? Were not the first inhabitants of Rome also corsairs? Our mission is to place the name of fillibuster in a new light. Captain Rolls, you and your whole ship's company are free to go wherever you desire."

A fierce uproar arose among the robbers. Many approved the captain's speech, some strove to oppose it.

Barthelemy stamped his foot violently. "Is there any one who desires to contradict me?"

"Yes!" shrieked Moody, stepping in front of him and thrusting the pipe he held between his teeth so close to the captain's face that it almost touched his eyes. "I say you are a fool, captain. You are acting against all the customs of pirates and, if you don't take back your order, I'll scuttle the ship myself."

"Do you think so?" said Barthelemy. "Skyrme! Seize this fellow and bind him to the mainmast."

The pirates shrank back, startled. Moody was the oldest of the band, whom no captain had ever ventured to punish. Barthelemy again motioned to Skyrme, and the latter, rushing upon the chief mate, bound him, in spite of his struggles, to the mainmast, so that he clasped it with both arms, his back turned to the crew; but, while pouring forth a continuous torrent of oaths, he still kept his pipe in his mouth.

"Is there any one else who wishes to oppose me?" asked the young chief.

A suppressed murmur ran through the ranks of the pirates, but no one raised his voice distinctly.

Barthelemy now turned to Captain Rolls and, taking from his pocket a piece of paper and a pencil he said:

"Captain Rolls! I hope you will reach London with your ship in safety. It is true that you will return her to her owners empty, but that is no fault of yours, in proof of which I will give you the following certificate for your justification at home.

We, free knights of fortune, bear witness in the presence of all whom it concerns, that Rolls, captain of the brigantine Neptune, was attacked by us on the Pacific Ocean, and, having just lost his guns and part of his rigging in a gale, defended himself against us in the bravest manner for an hour and a half, and did not yield until, after losing nine of our best men and our captain, we completely overwhelmed him and thereby alone obtained the silver entrusted to his care.

Captain Robert Barthelemy.

"Add," said Rolls, "that you succeeded in securing the silver only through Scudamore's treachery."

"True," replied Barthelemy, adding the sentence.

"Gentlemen!" interposed Scudamore trembling, "what are you going to do with me?"

"Nothing," said Barthelemy. "We promised that we would not harm a hair of your head."

"Yes," returned the other mournfully, "but if you release the captain, and me with him, what is to become of me?"

"I don't know," returned the corsair-chief, shrugging his shoulders.

Skyrme laughed aloud. "That's a splendid joke!"

"For heaven's sake! What shall I say to you?" stammered Scudamore, throwing himself at Barthelemy's feet. "Oh, gentlemen, don't leave me in this man's power, he will have no mercy on me. He is a horrible villain."

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Skyrme. "Don't spoil this joke, captain. When you set the commander of the brigantine free, let him take this fellow with him; what a fine lot of talk there will be when they call him to account at home for the service he has rendered us."

"Gentlemen! Brave men!" shrieked Scudamore clasping Barthelemy's knees. "Surely you are only jesting with me. It amuses you to drive me to desperation in this way, but you will not really ruin me. You cannot forget that I have rendered you an important service, and shall perform still more. I am a physician; you need one, take me with you. I will be just such a man, such a devil as all the rest, I'll be no disgrace to your band. You will never repent having made my acquaintance. I beseech, I implore you to say a good word to the captain for me. Oh, you good, brave man, you leader with the face of a hero, give me your hand, that I may kiss it."

"Rise," said Barthelemy curtly. "We *do* need a surgeon, I'll take you."

"What! a surgeon among us!" growled Moody, who was still bound to the mast, "a surgeon who, whenever one of our band is wounded in the hand or foot, will cut it off? A living human saw? A poisoner, who won't let a man die in peace? I've no use for him. Throw him out of the ship, or I'll kill him."

"Not another word, Moody!" cried Barthelemy. "It is my wish, and so it shall be. You manage the ropes and sails, but you need not trouble yourself about anything else."

"I beg you, sir," said Scudamore, "not to vex our valiant captain, you seem to be such a worthy man, I know I shall have the warmest regard for you."

"Come nearer, so that I can see you," said Moody. And when Scudamore approached near enough for him to reach him with his foot, he gave him such a kick that he nearly fell over backward.

"Men!" shouted Barthelemy, "bring me the cat o' nine tails. Give this man thirty blows on the back. Whoever disobeys me must suffer for it."

The nine-lashed scourge was instantly brought. "To work at once!" Barthelemy commanded. "No one is exempt from punishment."

Moody's eyes fairly started from their sockets with rage, and when the man bearing the cat o' nine tails approached him, he began to throw himself frantically to the right and left, but thereby only caused the blows to fall on him haphazard, till at last one knocked the pipe from his mouth.

Barthelemy coolly awaited the end of the punishment, and then called Scudamore to write his name in the list of pirates. Scudamore seized the pen with eager joy, and wrote his signature with such horrible glee that even the robbers were startled, and then, turning to Captain Rolls, exclaimed scornfully:

"When you reach London, inform the government of my new occupation."

Skyrme laid his huge hand on his shoulder and muttered between his teeth: "You scoundrel, you'll make a first-class devil."

"At least as good as any of you."

From that moment, Scudamore felt perfectly at home in his new sphere, looking at the list with his name enrolled as if it were some diabolical patent of nobility, and eyeing Captain Rolls with the air of a newly appointed official surveying his former comrades.

"Now, Captain Rolls," said Barthelemy, "you can take possession of your ship. But that we may not leave our mate here in exchange for your doctor, loose Moody from the mast."

Two pirates obeyed the command, avoiding the feet of the chief mate, who was trying to deal them a severe kick. When he found his hands free, his first act was to give the nearest liberator a heavy blow, and the second to pick up his short pipe and put it between his lips.

"Moody!" said the captain, folding his arms, "I just punished you as your commander's subordinate; now that it is over we again stand man to man; if you feel that I have wronged you, take your weapons. I am ready to give you any satisfaction and, if you desire, will fight with you."

Moody did not utter a syllable in reply, but hastily threw off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, loosed his collar and, with sparkling eyes, eagerly looked about for a weapon.

"Give him arms," said Barthelemy; "which will you have, pistol or sabre?"

"Give me a sword," gasped Moody hoarsely, "we shall be nearer each other."

"Make room for this brave man, lads; keep out of the reach of his arm, for he'll strike at any one. Excuse our fighting in your ship,

Captain Rolls, but satisfaction must be given in the presence of those who witnessed the offence. Well, Moody, are you ready? Give a signal, when you are ready."

Moody, however, required few preparations, and as soon as he seized the sword, with the flat of whose blade he dealt a severe blow on the back of the person who handed it, he began to strike furiously around him in every direction, so that had twelve men stood near he would have mowed them all down—only he failed to hit the one directly in front of him.

Barthelemy seemed to be merely toying with him. He scarcely moved his arm to parry the strokes which his adversary's fury did not suffer him to calculate.

"Take care—you are running directly upon my sword—Moody, don't put your own eyes out. Look, I am not standing where you are aiming. Don't strike at me so fiercely, I shall think you want to kill me."

It was a true robber-fray; for the rage of one adversary, the jests of the other, the rude laughter of the bystanders, the jeering, irritating remarks do not occur in duels between gentlemen.

The loud laughter of the pirates enraged the chief mate still more, and he grew fairly frantic when, glancing aside, he saw among them Dr. Scudamore, who had spread out his surgical instruments on his knees, and was gazing at him with a look of diabolical pleasure in his green eyes. Turning from the captain he rushed directly at the surgeon.

"Oho, my good fellow, don't run overboard," said Barthelemy, barring his way, upon which Moody, his face distorted by rage, again attacked him. Barthelemy avoided the blow and pierced his right arm. The chief mate instantly picked up his sword with his left hand; the foes again confronted each other, breast to breast.

Then Barthelemy, with a clever trick of fence, struck his antagonist's sword from his grasp and, setting his foot upon it, seized him by the throat and flung him among his companions.

Scudamore officiously ran forward to aid the wounded man.

"Don't come here!" roared Moody hoarsely, "or I'll tear you to pieces and put you on my wounds, as the ourang outang does leaves."

The chief mate would not allow his injuries to be bandaged, but though bleeding profusely, struggled with his companions till they bound one arm to a beam; and continued to strike about him with the injured one till that too, was bound, after which he kicked violently and when his feet were also tied, bit like a mad dog. They were obliged even to gag him before the doctor could bandage his wounds, and stanch the blood.

"How bad the old gentleman's teeth are," said Scudamore, with a malicious twinkle in his eyes. "We shall probably have to pull out some of them."

Moody could make no reply to this hideous threat except a roar like a wild beast's, and could not even bite the hand which the doctor passed over him.

Meanwhile Barthelemy had had the brigantine's crew released and told them that they would find all their weapons in the mate's cabin, whose key he would give them when he left the Neptune.

With these words he approached Rolls, bowed courteously, and held out his hand. After a short pause the latter clasped it, saying:

"Very well, I will take it, in the hope that we may meet again."

"I hope this will happen soon. A presentiment tells me that some day I shall kill you in a victorious battle, Captain Rolls."

"And one tells me that I shall get you hung, Robert Barthelemy."

"I thank you for your kind intention. By the way, you have only one keg of biscuits and a cask of water—that will not supply you until you reach London. May I offer you some of my store of provisions?"

"I will accept it, and trust that you will be fully repaid."

"Oh, it's not worth talking about. I would willingly lend you a few cannons, that you may not be captured on the way."

"I advise you not to do so, for if I had even two guns, I would try to recover my stolen silver."

"You are a good fellow. We shall meet again somewhere. Till then, farewell."

The two captains shook hands with each other. Meanwhile the pirates had rolled several casks of biscuit and water from their vessel to the brigantine. Barthelemy gave the sailors the key and, with a bound, reached the deck of his own ship, the pirates shoved off from the Neptune and, with three cheers, set sail. Half an hour later, two vessels were seen moving across the sea in opposite directions, widening the space between them every moment.

Chapter II

In Hispaniola

Robert Barthelemy's name became known everywhere on the high seas. Holland and Portuguese sailors trembled before him; for when they recognized his vessel and, after a desperate chase, gained the shelter of a harbor, he followed them, robbed them under the very guns of the port and, if attacked, ordered the town to be bombarded and its fortifications given to the flames.

There was no end to the marvelous tales related about him.

On the southern coast of the beautiful Island of Hayti, in a pleasant valley, stands a small wooden house, whose front is covered with climbing vines, and whose windows are filled with flowers; doves coo softly on the gable-roof, and a white cat lies purring on the threshold.

At both sides of the little house stretch cotton fields, whose green foliage charms the traveler's eye as, coming from the interior, he sees toward evening the little cottage in the quiet valley.

Who lived there?

One evening just at twilight, a light boat containing three men was pulled to the shore. One left it, the two others remained.

The youth who climbed the bank was a handsome fellow, with a bright, eager face; his complexion was bronzed by exposure to the weather and, as the wind tossed back his hair, the locks bared a high, broad forehead.

He gazed around him with the joyous expression of one who, after a long absence, again treads his native soil, and to whom every tree and bush is familiar.

A rough seaman's cape rested on his shoulders, his head was covered by a round straw hat, and his white shirt collar turned over a loosely tied scarf; he was probably a young sailor who, after

a long voyage, had again come near his home and was permitted to pay it a short visit.

The path was just as he had left it, perhaps a little more uneven than in the old days; the doves were cooing, and the white cat purred in the doorway just as of yore. The new-comer approached with noiseless tread, softly turned the handle of the door, and entered.

A gray-haired woman sat inside in a large armchair. She was the young man's grandmother. With her were three girls—two were fair, the third was dark, with starry eyes and a face like the young dawn.

All started at his entrance, exclaiming in one breath; "William!" The two sisters ran to meet him, the grandmother, unable to leave her chair, only held out her arms, his betrothed bride was the last to greet him that she might remain the longer in his embrace.

There was great delight in the little circle, a hundred questions rained upon him.

"It is a whole year since we saw you last," said the grandmother, with tears in her eyes.

"A whole eternity," murmured his betrothed bride, laying her head on his shoulder.

"You won't leave us again, will you?" asked his youngest sister, clinging to her brother's neck as if she could hold him at her side.

"I can stay an hour. The ship is in the offing while the sailors are getting a supply of fresh water on shore."

"Must you still remain absent from us?" asked the gray-haired woman, sighing.

"Unfortunately, yes. I expected to attain my purpose in a shorter time, but fate is against me; whenever I have thought I was approaching my goal, I was thrust back. Twice I have acquired

some property, but ill-luck deprived me of it, and I was forced to begin anew."

"Ill luck?" asked the younger sister, "that means shipwreck and pirates, doesn't it?"

"Yes, shipwreck."

"And not pirates? We have feared them most! How often we have said that they might capture or kill you, leaving us to weep for you forever."

The young man smiled.

"Fear nothing from them, dear. They will not harm me. At the utmost, they will rob me of my property, and you would receive me kindly, were I to return penniless, would you not?"

"Ah, if only you would never go," whispered his beautiful fiancée.

"Nay, dearest, I cannot let you spend your life here; I wish to see you in splendor. I long to take you to some great, beautiful city, where you can have pleasant society, where the sun cannot scorch these fair features, nor toil roughen these little hands. You will see that it will yet come to pass."

"Add: with the help of God!" said the grandmother. "Every enterprise must begin with God's favor, then it will end with it. Do you still pray, William?"

The young man sighed.

"You once taught me many prayers, grandmother."

"Do not forget them. *We* pray for you every day."

"Yes indeed," said the younger sister. "Grandmother reads from the prayer-book, and then we repeat a long prayer, in which we name all the good things we entreat God to grant you and all the evil ones from which we beseech him to guard you: storms, sickness, shipwreck, hunger, thirst, sharks, savages, and above all, Robert Barthelemy."

The young man gazed at her with a smile. "And why from Robert Barthelemy?" he asked.

"Because he is a wicked pirate, whom no one can resist, who is in league with the devil, and who either burns all whom he captures over a slow fire or else casts them into the sea."

"That is not true, Barthelemy never tortures any one."

"Oh, we remember him, too, in our daily prayer."

"Do you?"

"Yes indeed. Every day, crossing ourselves three times, we entreat God to sink to the bottom of the sea the horrible monster, whom we hold in such fear for your sake."

"So you all remember Robert Barthelemy at the end of your prayers?" asked the youth, embracing the girls in turn as they hung weeping and laughing around his neck.

"Julietta!" said one, "sing William the song you composed about him and the pirates."

"You have composed a song about me and the pirates?" asked the youth.

Julietta flushed crimson and after withdrawing shyly from his embrace she sang in a sweet, tremulous voice:

Far, far away the white dove flies,
In fierce pursuit the black hawk hies,
The dove is my lover so dear,
The hawk is the pirate I fear.
Oh, God, stretch forth Thy mighty arm
My absent lover shield from harm.
Wing the dove's flight,
The black hawk smite;
Back to its nest let the white dove flee,
Whelm the black hawk beneath the sea.

"Do you understand?" asked the younger sister. "You are the dove, and the hawk is—Robert Barthelemy."

The young man showered kisses upon the three beautiful girls, not one of whom suspected that the dear brother, the still dearer lover, whom they embraced was—Robert Barthelemy himself.

Yet it was even so. This quiet little house had sheltered his childhood, the gray-haired woman had taught him to pray, the merry girls to love.

Two families had emigrated to this island, one from Ireland, the other from Corsica; the parents of both speedily succumbed to the foreign climate, and the two families became united under one roof. Julietta grew up as William's sister to become finally his affianced wife.

They were poor, and it pierced the young man to the heart to witness their penury. He longed for a fairer fortune, and often stood on the threshold absorbed in watching some ship vanishing across the sea. He frequently met sailors who came on shore for fresh water, and heard of their wonderful adventures, of countries with golden sands, of the good luck of sailors, and when he returned home he brooded in gloomy silence for hours.

One day he told his family that he was going to seek his fortune and, bidding them farewell, embarked on a slave ship. Their tears at his departure, the memory of how they followed him, renewing their farewell, how his affianced wife, forgetting her maidenly shyness, convulsively embraced him, covering his face with tears and kisses, sinking unconscious on the shore as his boat tossed on the waves toward the ship—all these things remained forever engraved on William's heart, though Fate in after days inscribed much more upon it.

His industry and honesty made him popular upon the ship, first he became boatswain, then mate, and was already on his way home with the wages he had saved, already saw in imagination the

home, the family for whom he intended to win a better fate, when the ship was attacked and captured by pirates.

William fought single-handed against ten, but in vain, superior numbers prevailed. Knives already glittered at his throat, when the captain's hoarse voice shouted: "The lad must not be hurt. Bring him to me alive."

The pirates seized the youth and bore him to their leader. William looked at him in horror. It was Davis, the Sea Devil.

"You are a good fighter," said Davis in his shrill, piercing tones, "it's a pity that you became an ordinary sailor, you would have been a splendid pirate. Boys, give him a drink."

One of the pirates held his calabash filled with rum to William's lips, but he turned his head away in loathing. To drink from the pirates' cups means joining the band.

"Ha! ha!" cried the captain laughing, "You are an obstinate fellow. Have you ever seen a man tied to the main-mast when the sun is hottest? Or have you witnessed the jest of sewing a man naked in a raw hide and exposing him to the sun's rays till the skin on his body shrivels?"

"You can torture me," William remarked quietly.

"That is why I shall *not*," answered Davis. "Here, men, release this fellow and guard him well, for we shall yet make a man of him. Since I turned pirate, this is the first rascal who has dared to defy me: take good care of him, he'll be my successor some day."

William remained on the pirate ship, hoping that it would encounter a stronger vessel and he would thus be released.

Not a week passed without a fray, the pirates attacked every vessel that appeared on the horizon, even when it was larger than their own, and always conquered; the foe was vanquished or yielded, fortune favored the robbers.

At last two ships of war pursued the Sea Devil. William now hoped confidently for liberation. The foe had eighty guns and two hundred men, while the pirate had thirty guns and a crew of sixty.

When the pirates perceived that they could not fly, they boldly attacked one of the frigates and, at the first fire, sent a red hot ball into the enemy's powder magazine. The vessel was instantly blown into the air, her companion set sail and, with cowardly haste, fled from the pirates.

"So that is the fate of honest folk!" thought William, as the pirates' shouts of victory echoed around him, and turning to his next neighbor, he said:

"Give me a drink from your calabash."

The man was Skyrme.

"All right, my lad!" shouted the Hercules, giving the youth a hearty slap on the shoulder, "I knew this would be the end."

As he spoke he drew the young man to the captain and, before the eyes of the whole ship's company, he wrote in the black book the name: Robert Barthelemy.

Sisters, betrothed bride, and grandmother had wept till their hearts were relieved. The hour had passed, William had returned. He could not give his family a single shilling, though his ship was full of treasure. But it was all stolen property, and William could bring nothing stained with crime beneath the roof where his dear ones dwelt—poor, but pure in heart.

The gray-haired grandmother kissed and blessed him, her tears falling on his head, the girls went with him to the shore and, while Julietta clung about his neck, the others lingered behind, in order not to disturb the sweet mysterious whispers of the lovers.

"When shall you return?" asked the girl.

"When I can make you happy."

"Your love alone can do that. You need not sail the sea for my happiness, it could be gained by seeing you always at my side."

"That is what children think. I wish we could never outgrow the belief. But—in the hands of the poor everything is poor, even happiness."

The young girl shook her head.

Meanwhile they reached a copse which concealed the shore, and here the young man stopped.

"Don't go any farther; my companions are rough sailors, I do not wish them to disturb our parting. Turn back now. Our grandmother is expecting you."

The two sisters, with many kisses, embraces, and tears, turned back, but Julietta still clung to her departing lover, whispering in stifled tones.

"Take me with you."

The youth trembled from head to foot and gazed with a blanched face at the young girl, who still clasped him in a convulsive embrace.

"What are you thinking of? You would come with me—to sea?"

"I should be happy anywhere with you. I should not fear the storms, the sight of your face would give me courage. I should be happy if I might share with you every peril, every privation, which you must now encounter alone; and if it were not God's will that we should ever attain our goal, I could at least die with you."

William's face clouded still more. What love! What self-sacrifice! A Paradise opened before him. But at the portal of that Paradise stood an angel with a flaming sword, saying: "Back, your name is Robert Barthelemy."

"I have often thought," said the girl trembling, "that some day when you return and ask, 'Where is Julietta? Why doesn't she come to meet me?' they will lead you to a flowery mound and say: 'She

waited long, waited until her heart broke, she faded away and now rests here'—will you not then say to yourself: 'Why did I not take her with me?'"

"Do not talk so! Do not talk so!" exclaimed the lover, in a voice choked with anguish. "What you ask is impossible. Go back."

The girl grew as white as a lily, her arms fell from her lover's neck, her beautiful head drooped upon her breast.

He caught the fainting figure in his arms and laid it gently on the grass, pressed a kiss on the colorless face, and then rushed through the copse like a madman.

Barthelemy thrust the scarlet plume in his hat and joined his men; no tears glittered in his eyes, which now flashed fire; he was once more the proud, bold, reckless corsair chief.

The haughty carriage of his head, his steady glance and resolute movements all belied the gentle, dreamy lover of an hour before.

The first look from his keen eyes noticed the dissatisfaction on the faces of the band. During his absence, their mood toward their leader had changed. Some one had guessed its motive, and the rumor ran that their captain was entangled by a love affair.

"What is the matter?" cried Barthelemy, his eyes wandering from face to face. "Why do you look so sullen? Speak."

The pirates drew back defiantly. Moody thrust his hands into his pockets, puffed violently at his short pipe, and gazed at the clouds.

"Speak, old Lucifer, what has happened to these fellows?"

"H'm, captain," replied the pirate, folding his arms and leaning with his back against a beam, "don't you know the pirates' creed? The creed of loving no one and fearing no one."

"I know it very well. Do *I* fear any one?"

"But you love; and whoever loves, sighs, whoever loves, feels, and whoever feels is not fit for a pirate."

"So you think that if I hold a woman dear, I may not be the equal of any among you?"

"You could not, captain! Whoever is in love, is always thinking of the future, and longing, sooner or later, to retire to some quiet nook where he can be happy, grow old, and die; he is always gaping at the moon, he scorns his comrades and wants to be better than they. Such a man is not fit for us. Captain, I never loved any one in my life, never, and these stout fellows around you have neither father, mother, wife, nor sweetheart. Such men belong to the sea, men who, when tempests howl and bullets hiss, do not think of quiet homes and loving maidens. These flowers do not bloom for us. If a girl embraces and kisses you to-day, she will deceive and betray you to-morrow. Once we thought of bringing a cargo of wives from Paris. We chose them from the Salpetrière; at least we had no cause to fear that we should fall in love with them. Huh! Even that didn't last long; pirate folk are not used to joking; when they are angered, instead of beating, they kill. At the end of a month, not more than two of the women were alive. Such feelings demoralize pirates."

"So you believe," replied Barthelemy, looking him full in the face, "that your hearts are stouter than mine, because they expect nothing. You will have an opportunity to prove it at once. Take heed. We shall meet to-night on the high seas a fleet of Portuguese merchant vessels—forty-two ships under the convoy of two well-equipped men of war—from the islands of Todos los Santos, laden with gold and goods. If you want to see a venture that will fill half the world with admiration, come with me."

"Surely you won't assert that you'll conquer these forty-two ships?" asked Skyrme.

"No, but I will seize the one which has the richest cargo and, in full view of the whole fleet and the men of war, take her away with us from amid the forty-one other vessels."

The pirates gazed doubtfully into Barthelemy's face, uncertain whether he was jesting or in earnest.

"This will afford an opportunity to show whose heart is boldest!" said Barthelemy, "each one of us must cope with a hundred men, and each individual must perform every minute a miracle at which he himself will afterwards wonder."

"Captain," said Asphlant, after a long pause, "that borders on the impossible."

"A minute ago you were all boasting of your hard hearts; Moody doesn't seem to have interpreted your feelings correctly when he said that the pirate should fear nothing. And *you* want to teach *me* courage. Go! Let whoever fears to accompany me, quit the ship—we are near land—and return to his mother! If I am left with but three men, I will still do what I have said, for I am brave, not only while drunk with rum, like you, but while my face is still wet with the tears of the woman I love."

The pirates shrank back, shamed, yet perplexed, by the boundless audacity of their leader. Barthelemy noted the effect of his speech and turned again to them with words of stirring encouragement.

"Are you afraid when I lead the way? If I should say: 'Come with me to the bottom of the sea, we'll attack Neptune and drag him by the beard to the sunlight, I will lead you!' Would not you follow? If I should say: 'Let us declare war against half the world, sail up the Thames, and set fire to the Tower, I will lead!' Would you remain behind? If I should say: 'Earthly strife is pitiful, come with me to Heaven, come with me to Hell!' Would you not follow even there?"

The pirates, in a frenzy of enthusiasm, roared: "We'll go with you!" and stretched their hands to Barthelemy, who clasped them one by one.

"There, my men, there! We are sons of Fortune, and Fortune favors the bold. The sea is our slave, the storm our playfellow, death our delight! What others dare not think, we do."

"Hurrah! Long live Robert Barthelemy!" roared the whole band, tossing their caps into the air.

Twilight was gathering. In the cottage three angels, with clasped hands, were praying that God would bury in the depths of the ocean that evil monster, Robert Barthelemy, the terror of all travelers.

Darkness had closed in, the myriad stars of night were reflected from the surface of the sea. Forty-two ships, sailing at nearly equal distances from one another, appeared on the horizon. The wind was fair, the crews were sleeping quietly, the men watching from the mast-heads drowsily announced that a sail was in sight, the captains heard the words and turning over, fell asleep again.

The approaching vessel tacked for some time, then steered straight toward one of the ships in the middle of the fleet, the Triton.

Her captain was slumbering soundly in his hammock, when the mate entered and reported the approach of the craft.

"Salute him," said the commander, peevishly, drawing up the coverlet.

The approaching vessel stopped, and a boat put off in which sat six men, who rowed with vigorous strokes to the Triton. No one seemed disturbed by their approach. On their arrival, three men remained in their seats, while the three others climbed on deck.

One of the party inquired for the captain, with whom he had urgent business. The cabin where he slept was pointed out, and the speaker entered, the other two men remaining at the door.

"What is wanted now?" cried the captain angrily, leaning out of the hammock. To this question the stranger replied quietly:

"Not another word, sir. I am Robert Barthelemy."

The captain was rigid with fright. The pirate placed no pistol at his breast, did not threaten him with death; he merely said: "I am Robert Barthelemy."

"What do you desire?" asked the captain with chattering teeth.

"Nothing at all," answered the pirate, "except an answer to a single question: can you tell me which of these forty-two ships has the richest cargo?"

"You ask which has the richest cargo?"

"If it is against your principles to answer my question, I will take your own ship, and if you should make it compatible with honor to deceive me by false statements, you may rest assured that you shall eat steel and drink sea-water."

The pirate's resolute language, the sight of the fierce fellows in the doorway, speedily brought the captain to terms and he promised to point out the vessel in question, especially as he felt perfectly sure that, if the pirates ventured to attack it, they would certainly be defeated.

"Dress yourself and come with us," said Barthelemy.

"What? To *your* ship?"

"That you may not betray us by a signal to the other ships. No excuses. I must have the *best* cargo, unless you want me to content myself with yours. Forward!"

The captain yielded, threw on his clothes, and surrounded by the three pirates, without daring to attract the attention of his own men, he followed Barthelemy and his companions into the boat, which returned to the ship.

Meanwhile the men on board of the other vessels in the fleet quietly witnessed the strange vessel's intercourse with the Triton, without the slightest suspicion.

On reaching the Sea Devil, the abducted captain pointed out to Captain Barthelemy the vessel he desired, assuring him, on his word of honor, that it possessed the most valuable cargo, but withholding the fact that it had forty guns and a crew of one hundred and fifty men.

The Sea Devil instantly turned and steered toward the ship.

She was a huge three-master of clumsy build; her elaborately ornamented prow, the shape of her decks, and her rigging all marked her as an old-fashioned merchantman.

The pirate had come so near that one could shout from one ship to the other. The deepest silence reigned on board the former, the men stood motionless at their posts beside the ropes, oars, or guns. Suddenly, when every eye was fixed upon the approaching ship, whose mate watched the craft with drowsy indifference, not feeling the slightest suspicion, the captured captain perceived that no one was watching him and, springing on the bulwark, shouted: "To arms, men!" threw himself into the sea, and swam rapidly back to his own ship.

All this was done so quickly and unexpectedly that the pirates, in their surprise, did not know what course to pursue.

The attention of the crew had been instantly roused by the captain's warning shout, and the pirates saw with astonishment the superior force that opposed them.

Some looked doubtfully at each other, and all thought that instant flight was their only refuge.

Barthelemy gazed scornfully around, and quietly folded his arms.

"They are only Portuguese," he said contemptuously.

The corsairs burst into a loud roar of laughter and pressed closer to the ship, whose defenders, terrified by the sight of the fierce, laughing faces, discharged their guns without taking correct aim, not even doing the rigging of the Sea Devil the slightest damage. The grappling irons of the latter were already flung on her foe, and the next instant the savage pirates sprang on deck, so overwhelming the crew by their furious onslaught that, unheeding their officers' commands, they flung down their weapons and leaped into the sea.

The battle continued on the deck of the merchantman, whose firing had alarmed the other forty-one vessels, which now also began to

discharge their guns right and left, but without coming nearer, for they had no desire to mingle in the fray, and, in the very midst of the fleet, the pirates killed one half the Portuguese sailors, while losing only two of their own number.

Barthelemy became master of the ship, and lashing it to the Sea Devil, sailed off with both vessels at a wonderful rate of speed.

The two men-of-war that were guarding the fleet now appeared and gave chase to the pirate craft.

Barthelemy fled for a time and, after drawing the two ships far enough away, he suddenly turned, divided his crew between his own vessel and the prize, and sailed toward the pursuers.

The latter seemed startled by this audacity, signalled to each other, and while the pirates were wondering what was to be the outcome of their clumsy manœuvres, they stopped the chase and returned to the fleet, leaving the Sea Devil to sail joyously over the high seas with her booty.

The pirates landed on the coast of Guiana in a very merry mood. They had plenty of money; for they had found in the captured ship eight thousand gold coins, strings of oriental pearls sent by the Emperor of Brazil as a gift to the Queen of Portugal, and whole chests of valuable goods.

And was it their intention to put the money at interest, the costly fabrics in shops to be sold by the yard? No indeed, their custom was to drink till the last gold coin was squandered. Whoever laid aside his share of the booty was a traitor, and whoever withdrew with his money to lead a respectable life, they killed.

This habit of the pirates was well-known on shore. They came on land only when they had money and wanted to spend their treasure in the shortest possible time. On the sea men trembled before them, on shore they received them with open arms. There are documents proving that on the islands near Surinam the highest officials vied with one another in their hospitality to the pirates.

True the corsairs, in a single fortnight, spent eight thousand gold moidores, and the women of the city, from the highest lady to the lowest servant wench, were clad in silks and cashmeres, while the costly pearls destined for the fair neck of Her Majesty the Queen of Portugal clasped that of the Regent's wife; indeed there were gala entertainments from the halls of the governor's residence to the lowest hut, and the pirates went from one to another, here a gentleman and there a lout, carousing, dancing, fighting, and love-making all day long. For an entire fortnight there was neither night nor day, only one continuous revel, a sea of pleasure whose depths no man could sound.

Then, when all joys were exhausted, that is, when the last moidore had slipped through their fingers, the pirates went back to their ships, rubbed their eyes, and looked about for more work.

They received tidings of a richly laden brigantine which was approaching the coast. Towards evening the helmsman saw the ship on the horizon.

"Caution!" warned Barthelemy. "If they see us, they will have time to escape. Let the two ships remain here under Lieutenant Kennedy's command, while forty picked men go on board the sloop with me. Then we can approach the brigantine unsuspected."

He himself chose his men, among them Skyrme, Scudamore, the mate Henry Glasby, Asphlant, Moody, and Simpson, and felt so sure of capturing the brigantine before morning that, contrary to his custom, he did not see that the sloop was provided with a sufficient supply of provisions.

The night was dark and all through the long hours the sloop fairly flew in the direction where they expected to find the brigantine. According to Barthelemy's calculation, they would be within gunshot of her at dawn.

And lo, when the sun rose and they gazed around the horizon, the brigantine was nowhere in sight. They tacked right and left, but not a sail was visible anywhere on the horizon.

The brigantine had doubtless discovered them and vanished under cover of the darkness.

Barthelemy was furious, and, unwilling to return defeated, sought the brigantine by altering his course hither and thither. For a week he sailed the seas, constantly struggling with head winds and currents; on the eighth day his supply of provisions was exhausted and he was forced to anchor and send a small boat back to his ships for food and assistance. Barthelemy and his companions remained on the sloop.

According to the closest estimate the boat would need three days to reach the ships and the same time to return. So Barthelemy must stay six days at one point in the ocean.

A week before they were revelling in luxury, while wine flowed in rivers, now, under the rays of a scorching sun, they divided their last biscuit and longed for a drink of water.

At last Barthelemy thought of lashing some masts together into a raft, on which he sent two men with a cask to seek land. They were almost dying of thirst when the raft returned; the men had reached the shore and filled the cask with muddy water. They also brought a bunch of some plant which resembled a radish.

Miry water and radishes! A royal banquet for the pirates! But soon this, too, was exhausted, the six days had expired, the boat had not returned, and the adverse tide made it impossible for the raft to reach the shore a second time.

The men grew desperate and began to murmur.

"Worthless fellows!" blustered Moody. "Degenerate pirates, who succumb to hunger after fasting only three days. The world is going to ruin. Even pirates turn cowards. It wasn't so when I was young and Olonais was captain.

"For a whole week we ate nothing but dry roots, and then we got food from the governor's table in the heart of Vera Cruz."

"And you ventured to fight on land?" asked Asphlant, with an incredulous look.

"The ground certainly didn't tremble under our feet as it does under yours when you go ashore; once, twenty of us, under Olonais, pushed forward to the gates of Havana."

"I didn't hear that you ever captured the city."

"We came within an ace of it. Luckily for himself, the governor found out how few of us there were in the party before we got our hands on his throat."

"So you returned whence you came."

"It's easy enough for you to talk; the governor sent two hundred men after us in a warship, while we had only two boats. He also sent along an executioner to hang us to the trees on the coast when we were caught."

"So you managed to escape."

"We waited for them and, after having lured them far enough from Havana, I and another dare-devil, who, however, did not live to grow old, like me, slipped overboard and, swimming under the ship with our augers, bored eight holes in her bottom. Ho! ho! how quickly she sunk, how the soldiers roared for help, splashed about in the water and held out their hands for aid. Then Olonais went back with the boats and wherever a soldier's head rose out of the water he slashed it off with a huge sabre, all but the executioner, whom he recognized by his red cap and sent back to the governor with his compliments and the message that he did not need him."

"Your captain was a bold fellow, Moody. What became of him?"

"H'm! H'm! he had a strange end."

"I suppose he was captured at last."

"Far stranger than that. In a fight with savages, he was wounded and taken prisoner. The scoundrels ate the poor man."

"The boat!" suddenly shouted the man at the helm, and all left the old pirate and his stories to watch the approaching yawl, which they hailed with cheers, waving their caps aloft, while the returning men sat silent, as if they found the meeting less joyful than their comrades.

Skyrme was the captain of the boat. When he reached the sloop he stepped on her deck with a downcast, angry face, and answered the questions poured upon him from all sides: "Have you rum, meat, biscuit?" with "Nothing," and when, wondering at the reply, the men shook their heads, Skyrme turned to Barthelemy with quivering lips.

"Captain, we are deceived, betrayed, lost."

"What do you mean?"

"Both the ships you intrusted to Kennedy have disappeared."

"Impossible."

"It is true. We searched two days without finding any trace of them; at last we learned from some fisherman that, as soon as we were out of sight, they crowded on all sail and went to sea."

A roar of mingled fury and despair greeted these words; the cheated pirates, with knives uplifted, vowed to inflict a thousand tortures on the traitors. Barthelemy was deadly pale.

"We will meet them," he said hoarsely. "There is not a moment to lose. Forward my lads."

"Where?" asked Skyrme despairingly.

"To sea!" answered Barthelemy proudly, pointing to the offing.

"Yes, but in this plight, without a mouthful of bread, a drop of water."

"The first ship will give us both. Woe to those we encounter, they will fight with fiends."

"But suppose we should meet no vessel for days?"

"There are forty of us. If we meet no ship for two days, we will have a true pirate banquet; whoever draws the fatal lot will yield us his body for food, his blood for drink. We are supplied for forty days; those who survive will inherit our need of vengeance. Forward!"

The savage shouts of the pirates echoed far over the waves as they boldly steered toward the open sea, and that very day they met two well-armed sloops coming from the island of Defrada.

The buccaneers were thirsting for carnage. After a stubborn defence they captured both vessels, from which they took only the guns and provisions and then sunk them.

Again they sailed to and fro for several days without encountering any craft. Their provisions ran out and, just as they had divided the last portion of water, they saw on the horizon a Bristol vessel. The sloop instantly gave chase. The other tried to escape and the pirates pursued all day, crowding so much sail upon the sloop that she often buried her deck in the waves. Towards evening the clumsy ship, finding escape impossible, yielded without resistance.

The pirates were infuriated by the long pursuit, and the faces of many plainly revealed their desire to cool their vengeance by giving their captives a sea-bath.

Barthelemy climbed on deck, where the crew awaited him with uncovered heads.

"Where is your captain?" he shouted.

The worthy man, who was by no means desirous of renown, had gone below to his cabin, from which he was dragged and brought before Barthelemy, to whom he knelt.

"Stand up, don't kneel. Lift him, that he may stand erect."

Two pirates were obliged to drag the captain from his knees by main force, but when he perceived that he would not be allowed to

kneel on deck, he lifted up his feet and knelt in the air, a comical sight which turned the pirates' rage into laughter.

"What is your ship's cargo?" asked Barthelemy.

The captain earnestly begged to be released, protesting that he could not speak while he was held in such a way, and then, trembling violently, said that his vessel was loaded with Spanish wine.

"That word saves you," returned Barthelemy, as the pirates exultingly flung the captain into the air like a ball, and then ran down to the hold whence they speedily rolled up two or three iron-bound casks. The poor captain, sighing heavily, answered in reply to the buccaneers' query concerning the name of his wine, "Malaga."

The terrified man kept glancing anxiously toward one of the partitions in the ship, and the pirates, noticing his fear, broke down the door, behind which was carefully hidden a supply of the finest brain sausages, which they brought out hung around their necks like strings of beads.

This captain was a great gourmand, who had provided himself with the choicest provisions. The pirates found large coops filled with pheasants and Calcutta hens, which had been fed on nuts to give their flesh a better flavor. The rascals pulled out every one of the birds.

"Where's the barber?" they shouted, "Here's something to bleed!" and they dragged Scudamore forward to use his valuable surgical instruments to cut off the heads of the capons. Scudamore gleefully beheaded the squawking fowl, each one of which the Bristol captain seemed to mourn, and when he had dispatched the last, he suddenly seized the sighing sailor by the hair, put his knife to his throat, and would have sent him after the birds, had not Skyrme dealt him such a blow that he fell headlong.

"I supposed *these* were to follow!" said the doctor with a fiendish laugh.

Meanwhile the pirates began to pluck the poultry, and then cut the fowl up clumsily, lacking the help of Scudamore, who swore by all the imps of Satan that he didn't enlist to kill animals, but men.

The beautiful pheasants were flung into three large copper kettles, white pepper and cod-fish were added, and fires were lighted under the caldrons.

"Oh, what barbarians!" sighed the English captain, "To cook cod-fish with pheasants."

As soon as the meat was half done they gathered around, flourishing their knives. The captain was invited to take his seat among them and share the meal, which he eagerly did, for on discovering that the birds could no longer be saved, he developed a laudable intention of devouring enough of them for three men.

After the repast the wretches brought out the captain's preserved fruit, stored carefully away for his own use, and ate it before his eyes.

The rude fellows, accustomed to coarse smoked meat, greedily swallowed the expensive pistachio nuts and preserved pineapples, while saying contemptuously that they would much rather have onions.

And how they drank the noble wine! From the narrow-necked bottles in which it is usually sold! No, they knocked out the bottoms of the casks and dipped it up with their hats, or held their mouths under the cock and drank till they could scarcely rise. Swiftly as the wine poured into their throats, songs and laughter poured out, the wildest shouts of revelry which buccaneers ever uttered; even the English captain was obliged to drink his own wine, and the more he swallowed, the more firmly he began to believe that he himself was the pirate chief who had captured and plundered a ship, and advised the men to hang each other, being affected in precisely the opposite manner from Scudamore, who, under the influence of the wine, believed himself an honest man who had been taken prisoner by bandits; the result of which was

that the two men had a violent scuffle, and as the captain proved to be the stronger, Scudamore lost two of his teeth.

The former then triumphantly resumed his seat among the pirates, and by singing several songs aloud, roused their enthusiasm to such a pitch that Skyrme, starting up, vowed by a sea of wine to drink the Bristol captain's health in a glass which no man had ever used.

He kept his word, for, ordering a cask filled with Malvoisie to be rolled up, he knocked out the head, sprang into it, and there drank the health of the captain, who almost died with laughter, thinking it vastly entertaining that a man should sit in the vessel from which he drank without being afraid of swallowing himself.

The carouse on the captured ship lasted uninterruptedly for three days and nights. On the third day the intoxicated pirates embraced the drunken captain and, rolling a few casks of wine upon their own sloop as a remembrance, took leave, urging him, when he reached Barbadoes, to send them a few rich merchantmen, of which just now they were in great need. Before he arrived there, however, the captain had entirely recovered from his intoxication and, remembering, doubtless, his slaughtered fowl and plundered wine, resolved to send a few ships in pursuit of the pirates.

He went to the governor, related his misfortune, and induced him, in the absence of men-of-war, to fit up a merchant vessel with twenty-four guns and a sloop with ten, and despatch them under the command of Captains Rogers and Graves in chase of the bold buccaneers who roved so daringly in waters so near port. The latter were not yet sober, for they still had their wine, and when they saw the approaching vessels, believing that they would prove rich prizes, tacked and stood toward them.

The ship and sloop allowed them to come close, without answering the pirates' first fire.

This made the latter still bolder and, shouting to them to haul down their flags and surrender, they steered directly toward them.

But, at the instant they seized their grappling irons to throw on the ship, her guns suddenly thundered a warning and, instead of an easy prey, the buccaneers found themselves in the presence of a formidable foe, which attacked them on both sides with a terrible cannonade.

The peril instantly sobered the pirates, their confused yells ceased and nothing was heard except the voice of Barthelemy, who always felt strongest in the presence of the greatest danger.

Amid the most furious cannonade, he defended himself against both assailants, and as soon as a well-aimed broadside had caused momentary confusion on one of the vessels, he availed himself of it to run out between them, then, spreading all sail, fled with his foes in full chase. Both were swift craft. It was impossible for Barthelemy to escape.

The cannonade continued, the Sea Devil fighting while flying, the other two trying, first from the right, then from the left, to sail across her bows. Suddenly the pirate's fire ceased, Barthelemy had thrown his guns overboard.

The pirate sloop was instantly lightened and, at the very moment his foes believed him hopelessly lost, Barthelemy's craft flew away as swiftly as a sea-gull, once more at liberty.

The pursuers, left behind, at last gave up the chase and returned to port.

Off went the pirate, like a startled gadfly, to Newfoundland. Twenty-two ships were in the harbor. The buccaneers had neither guns nor powder, nothing but fury and knives.

On reaching the port they beat their drums, blew their trumpets, ran up the black flag, and the crews of the twenty-two ships fled to the shore.

The pirates chose the best vessel in the fleet, robbed the others, and set them on fire. The lesson received at Barbadoes still rankled in their souls, they must have flames somewhere. So long as they

remembered Barbadoes, not a ship escaped them, and if one from that port fell into their hands they slaughtered even the mice.

Luck changed, Barthelemy's star was in the ascendant, every day brought treasures and victories. The whole sea was his taxpayer. At last he took nothing from the captured ships except coined money; and the crews did not even offer any resistance. With his splendid ship, on whose prow was a carved and gilded figure of Fortuna, he visited every port in turn, levying taxes from the vessels anchored in them. They paid heavily; nay, if rumor could be trusted, safe-conducts could be purchased from him—in advance.

The rulers of all countries forbade their subjects to furnish the pirates with provisions; but that was easily remedied. Ships bound for Africa sailed at regular intervals, laden with provisions, from the English colonies. These met the pirate by a concerted agreement, allowed themselves to be plundered, apparently by force, and yielded up one or two ships' cargoes. The buccaneers paid well for them.

Once the young pirate chief ran into the harbor of St. Barthelemy and went on shore with his whole crew. The inhabitants illuminated their city, the governor came to meet him with a band of music and ordered fireworks in their honor, while the ladies gave them a ball.

The buccaneers knew how to entertain. True, with them dancing was very apt to close with an orgy, and the orgy to end in a brawl; but fair women feared kisses as little as broken heads; for the pirates scattered gold with lavish hands in every direction.

The pirates were gallants; they wore silk garments, gold lace, and plumed hats, the chains of two or three gold watches hung from their pockets, and diamonds and rubies flashed on their fingers. True, the gold lace was perfumed with rum and brandy, the breath of the flatterers reeked with the odor of onions and tobacco, pistols and blood-stained knives were carried in their pockets with the gold watches, and the hands on which diamonds glittered were

black with the smoke of powder. But fair women did not shrink from these things, for they knew that the pirates never left a place until the last ring had vanished from their fingers and the last watch from their pockets.

The buccaneer obtained nothing by cajolery, he paid cash for everything, and his hands were as full of gold as his lips of oaths. So why was it so great a marvel that the governors opened their doors, and those who ought to have led them to the gallows invited them to their tables.

The governor of St. Christopher tried to drive Barthelemy out of his harbor—what did he gain by it? Barthelemy burned his ships and bombarded his city; the governor of St. Barthelemy was wiser, he introduced the corsair to his wife and became a rich man. There are as many customs as there are countries. We should think such proceedings very strange.

The governor's wife was a beautiful Creole, whose eyes fired men's hearts. Her face was pale, but when the sun of passion glowed upon it, her cheeks at first flushed faintly with the rose-hue of dawn, then deepened into crimson.

To watch the alternation of these tints was the school of madness.

Everyone was affected by the contagion of this frenzy, save her husband—and no one more than the pirate chief Barthelemy.

The husband, a stout, placid man, sat beside Barthelemy at the banquet, opposite to the fair Creole. Barthelemy was drunk with wine and love.

"Look at that woman," he said to the husband, extolling his wife: "What a face! What eyes! What a matchless figure! A goddess who has left her temple to come to West India! See those eyes! How they sparkle! What need have we of sun or stars so long as they shine upon us?"

The husband, on the contrary, paid no heed, but apparently deemed it wiser to shut his eyes and nod sleepily.

Barthelemy shook him by the collar.

"Why are you not my foe, why don't I fling you into the sea, kill you at once? I would make myself a king to call your wife my queen."

The husband neither saw nor heard; when Barthelemy loosed his hold he fell back into his chair and snored.

Wild songs and the rattling of glasses echoed on all sides; each of the buccaneers had found a sweetheart, and the voices and laughter of women mingled with the oaths of the pirates; it seemed to be considered a special token of tenderness—and many of the corsairs bestowed it,—to fire their pistols in the room.

Barthelemy, with a trembling hand, held out his wine-glass to the Creole who drained it to the health of the corsair king. When she set it down, he was kneeling at her feet.

She had a fair round neck, and Barthelemy could not bear to see it without an ornament, so snatching from his own a diamond chain worth ten thousand dollars he clasped it round the beautiful woman's throat. Could he do so without pressing her head against his breast, and when it rested there, could he help kissing her?

All the buccaneers joined in such a thundering cheer that the walls shook, pounded the tables with their fists, and fired salvos of shots.

The husband slept on like a drowsy bear. Barthelemy clasped the Creole's slender waist.

"Come with me," he whispered beseechingly; "I'll buy you from your husband, I'll give him a million of gold in exchange. If he wants a fleet, I'll drive hundreds of ships here like a flock of sheep. Come with me, I will rob Satan of Hades and transform it into a Paradise for you. I will load you with treasures, overwhelm you with delights, come with me!"

"Ay, ay, Captain," shouted Moody from the corner where he sat surrounded by empty wine bottles, "drain the cup of joy and dash it against the wall."

Just at that moment a messenger entered, bringing dispatches for the governor.

The pirates gave him no chance to speak. "Don't wake him, don't you see how sweetly he is sleeping? You would better drink."

The herald was soon completely intoxicated and, seeing the governor's wife whispering tenderly to Barthelemy, in the bewilderment of a drunkard's ideas he carried the despatch to him.

The latter was about to throw it down when, glancing at the address, his eye caught the name "Hispaniola."

The young leader's face suddenly darkened; he tore open the despatch and with blanched face, read the following lines.

Sir: The slaves in San Domingo rebelled a few days ago, attacked the cotton plantations along the whole coast, burned and destroyed them, and pitilessly murdered the planters, sparing neither man, woman, nor child. There is not a single dwelling left standing on the northern coast of Hispaniola.

Drops of cold perspiration stood on Barthelemy's brow, his eyes stared fixedly into vacancy, his fingers clenched the paper convulsively; then, starting up, he flung the Creole aside and dealt the table such a blow with his clenched fist that the pirates, to a man, instantly became silent and stared at him in wonder.

"The carouse is over!" thundered their leader in a terrible voice. "Hence to the ship, drop toying, and seize your weapons."

The buccaneers could not yet recover from their bewilderment. The Creole beauty, with sparkling eyes, pressed nearer to Barthelemy and raised his hand to her glowing lips.

Barthelemy's eyes sought Moody. The old pirate had drunk heavily, but was perfectly sober.

"You told me to drain the cup of joy to the dregs and then shatter it," cried the young chief. "I will shatter it ere my lips have touched it."

Even while speaking, he wrenched his hand from the Creole's clasp, and drawing his sword, cried:

"Forward to the coast of Hispaniola."

Carried away by their leader's passion, the buccaneers joined in a terrible cheer, and throwing down their glasses, pressed after him with drunken enthusiasm from the joys of the banquet to wrestle with the fury of the tempests.

The ship reached the shore of Hispaniola. Barthelemy promised his men the treasures of a whole people, reserving for himself only their blood.

He did not find a single ship in the harbor; there were only a few fisher-boats tossing on the waves, from whose owners he learned that the insurgent slaves, after ravaging the coast, had retired in large numbers to the interior of the island.

Barthelemy went on shore and rushed like a madman toward the cottage.

He soon neared the hill which concealed the little valley, and continued his way slowly, with a throbbing heart, as if fearing to behold with his eyes what he already witnessed in his soul. The hill afforded a view of the cottage. Here he had parted for the last time with his betrothed bride; here she had sobbed, "Take me with you"; here she had predicted, "Some day you will return and ask, 'Where is Julietta? Why doesn't she come to meet me?'"

His very heart shrank. One step more, and he would reach the hill-top—a weeping-willow obstructed the view and, bending the boughs apart, he gazed down into the valley.

It was empty. Bare yellow fields lay dry and withered in the place of the green plantation, and the site of the cottage was marked by a black spot.

Barthelemy stood motionless, with fixed eyes. No sigh escaped his lips, but he suddenly fell as if lifeless, with his face pressed against the grass. Perhaps he might have passed into the eternal slumber, had not sad dreams come and forced him to witness the horrible bloody scenes enacted when the Satanic band burst into the quiet, lonely cottage, where the three girls and their grandmother knelt in prayer; he saw the rabble rush in through door and windows, seizing their victims by the hair, the thin, gray locks of the poor old grandmother, the luxuriant raven ones, which he had so often kissed, of his worshipped Julietta. If he had been lying in his grave, such a dream must have roused him.

"Ah!" shrieked the pirate struggling back to consciousness, like a person throwing off a deadly burden from his heart, and gazing around him, gasping for breath as he wiped the perspiration from his eyes and brow. "It is well that it was *only* a dream," he faltered. Then a glance into the valley proved that it was no delusion, but reality. Springing to his feet he rushed wildly down into the valley to the ruins of the hut, called the names of his dear ones, stirred the ashes as if he might find them there, examined the footprints in the mire to see if he could discover among them any traces of those of the objects of his love. But he found nothing except the marks of clumsy negro feet, nowhere the imprint of the dear, fairy-like ones. They were lost. Not a vestige of the cottage remained except the charred threshold. Barthelemy embraced and kissed it, his eyes growing dim with tears.

"Ah!" he shouted, dashing them from his eyes, "Not water, but oil on the flames! This is not the time to weep, but to avenge. A pirate's tears are drops of blood! I will avenge you, my murdered family, on mankind, on the whole world. Earth, grant me no more rest. Change the wine-cup to wormwood ere it reaches my lips, and every throb of my heart to hate. I had a single joy, my soul a single steadfast idea, which came to my remembrance whenever any one sued to me for mercy, and I granted it. That was joy. But it is forever torn from my heart, henceforward I will give quarter to no one. Hear my vow, ye powers of Hell, and tremble—I will send

you as many black fiends as there are grains of dust in this handful of ashes which I scatter on my head."

With a terrible imprecation, Barthelemy flung into the air a handful of ashes which he had clutched and, as they floated slowly down upon his head, he sank on his knees and, sobbing convulsively, kissed the threshold.

"My God, my God, if it was Thy will to punish me, why didst Thou not dash me against a cliff during the raging of a tempest, why didst Thou not let me perish by arms, by hunger? Why didst Thou not make me mount the scaffold? Why didst Thou permit Thy angels to atone for my crimes?"

He sobbed bitterly, while the ashes he had scattered to bear witness to his vow, drifted slowly down upon his head.

A traveller, driving his mule before him, came through the path leading from the forest. Barthelemy barred his way. The man started at sight of the fierce-looking stranger and began to appeal to his patron saint.

"Whence do you come?" asked the pirate.

"From La Vega. I bring good news. The insurgents are conquered and already hang along the coast."

"Bad news for me! Have none of them escaped?"

"A few hundred took refuge in a captured ship and fled to Africa."

"I thank you. You can go on."

The messenger continued his journey, shaking his head; he could not understand why any one should regret that the rebels were conquered, or rejoice because a number of them had escaped.

"What has happened to you, captain?" asked Moody, when Barthelemy returned to the ship. "You are as pale as a corpse."

"Nothing," replied his commander in a hollow tone. "Only my heart has died in my breast."

The pirates asked no further questions. They knew all. Whenever any one of them left the band, the others kept watch from a distance. They had seen Barthelemy sitting despairingly beside the ruins of the hut, and all shrank in timid silence from the pallid man.

Barthelemy shut himself up in his cabin and, taking a chart, began to study the course to Africa. His face was gloomy, but ever and anon his eyes flashed fiercely. Suddenly he heard a knock at the door and angrily opened it.

"Who is disturbing me, now?"

"I, captain," replied Scudamore. "We need your judgment."

"Go until to-morrow. I will grant no favors to-day."

"I want no favors from you, only the execution of the law. Three members of the band took advantage of the time during which we were on shore to desert and take refuge in the interior of the island. But I sleep with my eyes open and, though I have but two of them, can watch the whole hundred men."

"And me also?"

"There can be no discrimination, captain, we need one another, whoever seeks to leave us is a traitor. We want no path for retreat, only for advance. Whoever has once sworn faith, is ours forever, belongs to hell, no power can free him, and if he will not live with us he must die."

"Have you captured the fugitives?"

"All three, they were only a mile from La Vega when we overtook them."

"Bring them before me singly."

Scudamore went in search of the prisoners, with fiendish delight, and returned dragging the first one by the ear.

He was a cowardly fellow whom the pirates had forced to join their band.

"Oh, captain!" he cried falling on his knees before Barthelemy, "if you believe in God and the angels, let me leave this accursed place. You are all doomed to hell, permit me to save my soul from the flames of purgatory. Oh! all you saints of Heaven, have mercy on my sinful head."

A horrible roar of laughter from the pirates greeted these imploring words.

"You shall die," said Barthelemy coldly, motioning to the men to lead him away.

"Captain! For heaven's sake, you won't let me die thus, without the sacrament or extreme unction, to the ruin and eternal perdition of my soul?"

"Wait, I'll confess you," said Scudamore with a diabolical laugh, putting the rope around the doomed man's neck.

"Oh God, my Creator, is there no one to say a prayer for me? Alas, I once knew so many and have forgotten them all."

The pirates, laughing loudly, dragged to the mast the unhappy man, who began to roar the air of a song whose words he had long since forgotten. A minute later the song ceased, the man was hanging above.

The second prisoner was now brought forward. He, too, was only a common sailor. His companions were forced to bind him hand and foot in order to drag him before the captain, and he kept up a constant torrent of oaths.

"Yes, I ran away from you because I loathed this vile, roystering life, toiling and fighting every day and when, at the risk of death, one gained a little money, a man had to throw it away. I'll run from you a hundred times more."

"Not once," replied Scudamore grinning. He apparently had far more taste for the hangman's trade than for the physician's. Barthelemy silently waved his hand, and the pirate hung.

The third prisoner now appeared, and Barthelemy exclaimed in surprise, "That is Henry Glasby."

The former captain of the Fortuna was the third captive.

Glasby was a handsome young man, with a noble face, whom the pirates kept among them by force on account of his superior knowledge of seamanship; his gentle nature and kind heart were known to the whole band, for he protected all who fell into their hands, as far as lay in his power, frequently paying their ransom out of his own pocket; his entreaties had saved many a ship from burning, and he had always kept aloof from the bacchanalian orgies of his companions, for which reason they did not hold him in special regard, and always watched him with suspicious eyes. He had already made one attempt to escape, which had been pardoned, now he was certainly doomed. After the first expression of surprise, Barthelemy's face had regained its cold, unmoved composure. Scudamore awaited the verdict with greedy impatience.

Glasby stood before Barthelemy with unquailing resolution.

"You have already pronounced sentence upon two," he said fearlessly. "There is no reason why you should make me an exception. I have but one request; send this valueless locket containing my portrait to my mother,—she lives in Norfolk. It also has a curl of hair belonging to my betrothed bride, whom I longed to see, and for whom I die."

Barthelemy trembled and gazed intently at Glasby's face.

"You have a betrothed bride whom you longed to see?" he said in a stifled voice, loosing the ropes from his wrists—"go back to her, I release you—"

"Captain! Two are hanging already," shouted Scudamore, furious as he saw the escape of the man whose death he most desired. "The third rope is waiting for its ornament."

"It will pull up the man who dares to contradict my judgment!" answered Barthelemy, gazing fiercely at the defiant faces, and closed the door of his cabin behind him.

The whole band remained silent.

From that moment Barthelemy was completely transformed. His heart was stone, nothing touched it except a woman's sobs; then he fled, it was more than he could bear.

To his men he was stern to the point of injustice, the most trivial offence did not escape his punishment, every evening he held a court of justice by which he had those who were accused imprisoned in the ship's hold, flogged, or shot. Yet there was one person whom he never attacked, Glasby. He spent whole nights in questioning him about his family life, his mother, and his betrothed bride, listening with eager attention to all the details for the hundredth time. He showed mercy to no one, burning or sinking the captured ships, unmoved by submission or entreaties, but if a vessel chanced to have a woman on board, and he heard her voice he would take nothing from the ship and let her pursue her way uninjured.

One day he assembled the crews of both pirate cruisers on the deck of the Commodore.

"My lads," he said, "life here is beginning to grow wearisome. Fortune offers her favors in vain, there is no one on this side of the world whom we fear; we have plenty of booty, but no fame, for we encounter no foemen worthy of us. Let us go farther. These Dutch and Portuguese merchantmen already fear us to such a degree that they almost love us. Let us go where we are not known, among the English and French, whose troops sleep secure in their fortresses along the coast, where Fortune is still a coy maiden who permits her favors to be grasped only by strong hands. Let us win honor

and fame in the places where the wise law-makers have written a hundred paragraphs against us in their code of laws, let us tear out the page, and place in its stead the words that there are no laws for the brave."

Barthelemy wished to fire his comrades' hearts as he had done in former days, but he was unsuccessful, the tones which had once thrilled them were dead; the fire in his soul, one spark of which had sufficed to kindle theirs, was extinct. Now he could influence them only by his coldness.

"Pirates," he went on, folding his arms, "I promised you treasures, you promised me blood. Let us both keep our word. Our work here is beggarly. To plunder the ships of peaceful merchants, who surrender their goods without defence! And of what use are they? We merely give them away. I will take you to the home of treasures, the coasts of Africa, where ships laden with gold-dust plough the sea, where the negro kings sleep on golden sand and the negro warriors fight with golden weapons. We will plunder *these* ships, dig the golden sand from under the sleeping kings, and bury them in it, wrench the precious weapons from the negroes' hands and give them cheaper ones of iron in their hearts."

This pleased the pirates who made up the Commodore's crew, and they responded with murmurs of approval, but the Fortuna's men remained silent, with sullen, defiant faces.

Barthelemy noted the different effect he had produced, and wrapping himself deliberately in his ample cloak, whose folds concealed his hands, he added: "Perhaps there is some one who does not approve this plan, let him state what he has against it. He can speak freely, I will listen."

The crew of the Fortuna began to gather into groups and whisper together; at last two men came forward, hitching their trousers, and stood with resolute faces before the captain.

"Yes, we don't approve of your plan, captain," said one, and the other nodded assent, while their comrades murmured approval.

"You don't approve of it, my children?" asked Barthelemy in his sweetest tones, "and why?"

"Because we are not tired of having things go well with us and finding booty everywhere without danger," said one.

"Because we don't want to seek unknown risks in unknown gold regions," added the other.

"Where there are laws against us."

"And where royal men-of-war protect commerce."

"We don't care for fame, but prizes."

"And we would rather stay here, where people fear us, than go where we must fear others."

"If you want blood, we can shed as much here for you as you desire."

"But we won't go a thousand miles and seek danger merely to avenge you on the negroes who killed your sweetheart."

Robert Barthelemy's face blanched to a ghastly pallor.

"You wish to stay here, my dear children," he replied in a tone of childlike blandness. "You like it here, and are afraid to go elsewhere. Why, my dear children, just think it over a moment."

"We have already thought of it," they answered defiantly.

"Very well," said Barthelemy, suddenly throwing back his cloak, and the next instant he had sent a bullet through the heads of both.

For a moment the others stood petrified with horror, then they turned furiously upon Barthelemy, their eyes and knives flashing around him.

"What! You dare to oppose, when I command! Away with you, worthless rascals!" thundered their young leader in a voice which rose above the fray, and seizing a piece of stout rope he rushed among them, dealing blows right and left at the mutineers, who

were so amazed by his daring that, forgetting their rage, they scattered.

"Put them all in irons. Keep them in confinement on bread and water for three days! If any one utters a word against me, throw him into the sea," shouted Barthelemy, and in a moment the Fortuna's crew were disarmed by the Commodore's men.

"You are taking a great risk," Glasby whispered to Barthelemy.

"Oh, I fear neither man nor devil," replied the pirate defiantly.

The ships sailed for Africa that very day. The time of punishment of the Fortuna's crew expired on the third, and Barthelemy, to prevent any attempt at flight, removed all the nautical instruments and all the men who had any knowledge of navigation to the Commodore.

Nevertheless the Fortuna vanished one night when they were still four hundred miles from the African coast.

As Barthelemy predicted the ship ran on a sandbank in the first storm which overtook her, and her crew all perished.

But the leader did not give up his plan; though his strength was diminished, his courage was unchanged.

One morning at dawn he saw a mountain peak on the horizon—it was Cape Corso. "We have reached our destination," said Barthelemy to the exulting pirates, and began to cruise up and down before the harbor.

At that time the French government had a monopoly of the india-rubber trade and, as the most venomous antidote of monopoly is smuggling, the coasts of Cayenne were constantly watched by French men-of-war.

Two of them instantly noticed the suspicious craft and, believing it to be a smuggler, gave chase. Barthelemy lured them too far from the shore for the battle to be seen, then, after a short conflict, conquered both, sank one and, keeping the other, manned it with

part of his crew under the command of Skyrme, and called it the Fox-Hound.

From the French prisoners he learned that the two most formidable English war-ships, the Weymouth and Hirondelle had left the coast and would not return for several months, so they sailed boldly into the harbor.

The Onslow, the finest vessel of the Anglo-African Company was lying at anchor in the port.

Her captain and officers were on shore, where the governor was giving a ball in their honor. From the windows of his residence they could see the pirates assail their ship and, ere they could hasten back to it, the crew had surrendered.

The captain of the Onslow, Fennimore Gee, rowed alone to the pirate ship and, pistol in hand, demanded that Barthelemy should restore his ship and fight with him like an honest man, instead of attacking by stealth.

The novel proposition of returning a captured ship to its owner and then fighting for its possession so pleased Barthelemy that he declared his willingness to accept it.

His own men also accepted the challenge, but the Onslow's crew refused to fight against Barthelemy, and begged him to take them into his band.

Captain Gee despairingly fired his pistols among the rascally throng, and appealed to Barthelemy, if he had a drop of honorable blood in his body, not to stain his fame as a buccaneer by receiving into his band the worthless fellows who, in the hour of peril, had deserted their captain.

"I'll tell you, my worthy captain," said Robert gayly to his opponent, tossing in the little boat on the waves below. "You are so brave a man that I could not reconcile my conscience to leaving you without a ship. Come, I'll give you, in exchange for the Onslow, my own vessel, the Commodore here. I can vouch for its

being a good sailer and valuable, though I got it very cheap. But from sheer philanthropy, I can't give up your crew, you would decimate it; the soldiers, however, you shall have, I don't care what becomes of the land rats."

So before the eyes of the whole harbor, he exchanged ships with the English captain, and after having the old name Onslow effaced and Royal Fortune painted over it in large gilt letters, he set sail with both his vessels for Calabar.

By way of pastime, part of the pirates, under Skyrme's command, made short expeditions on the Fox-Hound to search for any ships that might be crossing their path.

One day the Fox-Hound returned to the Royal Fortune, with all sail set, and reported having noticed on the horizon two suspicious vessels, which instantly gave chase; they were probably men-of-war, and the Fox-Hound had escaped only by crowding on all sail, but they were still pursuing.

"Let them come," said Barthelemy, sweeping the sea with his glass, and soon discovered on the horizon the two ships which, at that distance, resembled sea-gulls.

"Those are not men-of-war," cried Barthelemy, "they look more like pirates, and are coming toward us with every inch of canvas spread. They will fare badly."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Skyrme, "that's all we lack. We have conquered plenty of merchantmen and war-ships, now we must capture pirates to have the whole variety."

The entire crew watched the approaching ships with eager curiosity, saying to one another, "They think they are attacking a government ship, how amazed they will be when they reach us!"

Moody was shading his eyes first with one hand and then the other, straining them till they fairly started from their sockets. Suddenly he clapped his hands, threw up his hat, and throwing himself down on the deck laughed till he was red in the face.

"Moody! Have you gone crazy?" asked Barthelemy. "The man never laughed before in his whole life. What ails you, Moody?"

"Don't you know those ships?" he asked, half raising himself, then flung himself back in another fit of laughter so uncontrollable that the men were obliged to seize and hold him before he grew quiet.

"Speak, old lunatic, what ails you?"

"When I tell you, you'll all jump out of your skins. Don't you see those two ships? Don't you recognize them? They are the Sea Devil, and the Dutch ship which ran away from us, left us starving on the sea, and now are coming straight into the jaws of our guns! Isn't it enough to drive a man mad with joy?"

The awful shout of delight from the pirates drowned Moody's laughter; with bloodthirsty eagerness they rushed for their weapons, climbed on the yards to get a better view of the approaching vessels, and shook their fists at them.

They had found the traitors who had left their comrades to meet the most terrible death by starvation, and who now voluntarily came to encounter their revenge. This thought moved even Barthelemy so much that a burning flush crimsoned his pale face. His mute lips refused to give utterance to his feverish joy, but his countenance belied them.

"Calm yourselves!" he said to his men, "we'll let them come nearer; get behind the bulwarks, they must be an easy prey, and their hearts shall stop beating when they suddenly see our faces."

The buccaneers quietly drew back; their foes came toward them with every sail spread. Already they could see distinctly on the prow the hideous figure of the Sea Devil, and as the pirates recognized one man after another they whispered, gnashing their teeth: "There is so and so!"

"Keep your weapons ready," Barthelemy commanded in a low tone.

"We need no knives, we'll tear them to pieces with our nails," said Asphlant.

On arriving within gunshot range, the black flag suddenly fluttered from every masthead of the Sea Devil, and a bullet, hissing between the Royal Fortune's sails was the challenge to speak. The deepest silence reigned on Barthelemy's ship. The Sea Devil sailed close up to it, the Dutch consort remaining a little behind. "Oho! Where is your captain?" shouted some one on the Sea Devil.

"That's Kennedy's voice!" whispered Barthelemy giving the signal to raise the black flag.

At the moment when, to the horror of the men on the Sea Devil, the black flag floated from the Royal Fortune's mast, Barthelemy sprang on the bulwark, shouting in stentorian tones:

"I am here, you worthless traitors! Do you still know Robert Barthelemy?"

The assailants were instantly as silent as if death had stricken them; Kennedy, in his terror, leaped into a boat and, pushing off from the ship tried to reach the Dutch vessel, the others flung their weapons away like madmen and, in the insanity of terror, leaped into the waves.

They were soon released from their trouble; two volleys poured at the same moment from the guns of the Royal Fortune and the Fox Hound shattered the Sea Devil which, amid frightful shrieks of despair, sank with every man on board.

Meanwhile Kennedy and a few others had succeeded in reaching the Dutch ship, which instantly spread every sail in a desperate effort to reach the land.

Barthelemy pursued with both his ships.

The fugitive flung overboard all her ballast and finally even her guns, by which sacrifice she succeeded in reaching the shore before the other ships could interpose.

A throng of Calabrian negroes stood on the land watching the fight.

Kennedy hastily ordered his men into the boats and escaped to the shore. "Not even that will save you," said Barthelemy, ordering the largest boat to be lowered. He had eight guns placed in it, entered himself with forty of his men, and commanded them to row to the beach.

Kennedy saw that Barthelemy intended to land and began to tell the negroes, with loud cries, that he was a monster who had come to conquer their land and burn their dwellings. They must on no account permit him to come ashore.

The shouts of the negroes showed that the pirates had succeeded in exciting these savages against their former comrades, and the negroes soon began to greet the boat with a shower of arrows and stones.

"So much the better," murmured Barthelemy. "Two at one blow: traitors and negroes. To-day vengeance will reap a harvest, this is the festival of death. Fire among them."

The guns of the boat roared, scattering death among the blacks, in whose ranks the bombs tore wide openings, and, amid this thunder, forty men landed in the face of ten thousand negroes.

Kennedy and his companions urged the Calabrians to a desperate defence, and they rushed with bloodthirsty fury at the buccaneers, hurling a cloud of arrows and lances.

Only two or three fell wounded by these missiles, the others moved forward in close ranks, aiming at the most prominent leaders in the negro ranks.

When the latter saw their strongest warriors, who in battle were equal to a hundred men, fall by invisible weapons sent from a distance before they could reach their assailants with their battle axes, they began to retreat in confusion, left their huts and, dragging Kennedy and his men with them, climbed a steep hill, up

which they could not be followed, and from which no efforts availed to draw them. Barthelemy, with wild delight, walked over the battle-ground, counting the corpses. They had all been victims of his revenge for his murdered love.

"This was blessed work," he murmured. "Hell is blacker by eight hundred negroes."

"Captain," said Scudamore, rousing him from his reverie, "our bitterest enemies have escaped under our eyes. There is but one way to reach and destroy them in the place where they have sought refuge."

"What is it?"

"It would be idle for me to show you, you would not use it, but give me authority to do as I please for half an hour and I promise to bring you the heads of all these traitors without sacrificing one of our men."

"I should like to see that."

"You will hear it. You need not witness it; it is a stratagem of war which you could not learn from me. Go back to the ship and wait for my return."

This bold language surprised Barthelemy. A sort of intoxication arising from the bloodshed still held him in thrall, and he allowed himself to be persuaded to return to the Royal Fortune and let the doctor work his will. As soon as the captain was out of sight, Scudamore ordered the pirates to go to the deserted cabins and murder the families of the fugitives.

Shouting exultingly, the fierce crew, thirsting for revenge, obeyed; from the lofty cliff the blacks saw their wives killed, their children slaughtered, and when all were slain, their homes set on fire and destroyed amid clouds of smoke that rose to their eyrie.

Then Scudamore stepped forward and shouted:

"Now, you black scoundrels, you have seen how we served your families. The same fate awaits you, down to the last man, if you don't submit and surrender our friends, whom you dragged away with you."

Kennedy saw through the stratagem and protested violently.

"Don't believe a word he says, the whole thing is a fiendish plot, we are no friends of his, we don't know one another."

"Kennedy, don't be a coward," said Scudamore reproachfully, "why should you deny that you agreed to lead these people astray so that they would run into the mouths of our guns? Be bold, and with the help of your stout comrades throw them down on our knives; I, a pirate, am worth a hundred negroes; don't disown me."

The negroes, with threatening gestures began to surround Kennedy and his men, who in great terror, tried to defend themselves.

"Brave friends, don't believe the words of that devil, we never saw him; those men are our worst enemies."

"Oh, Kennedy, you disgrace us, how can you disown us when you, too, sail under the black flag? If we had never seen each other how should I know that you have, on your left shoulder, the mark of a gallows, branded there when you were in the pillory?"

The negroes instantly seized Kennedy, stripped his coat from his shoulders and, as soon as they had convinced themselves that Scudamore's words were true, they flung him down and one, raising his copper axe, set his foot upon his victim's neck.

"Don't hurt a hair of his head!" shouted Scudamore, feigning fury. The next instant the axe fell, and Kennedy's head was hurled over the cliff.

The others followed.

When the half hour expired, Scudamore returned to Barthelemy and, pointing to the boat, said: "There are the heads of the traitors!"

Chapter III

Revenge

The time of the monsoons had come. News of shipwrecks arrived daily. The elements of the air and sea were ceaselessly contending in a strife before which the petty quarrels of men were ended. Nothing was heard at present of Barthelemy. The English and Dutch agencies were perfectly aware that his ships were anchored in the harbor of Cape Corso. Who would venture to tempt Providence by putting to sea in such weather? The heart of the boldest pirate trembles when he sees sky and water transformed into darkness, illumined only by flashes of lightning. It would be a devil and not a man who, amid this illumination, would risk a battle in the midst of peals of thunder and the howling of the gale.

Barthelemy was resting on the coast; his men were drinking, carousing and giving banquets. What else could they do in such terrible weather when, each morning, the sea flung fresh wrecks upon the strand?

Meanwhile the governments were quietly gathering their ships against the bold pirates who dared, single-handed, to assail a whole quarter of the globe; in the harbor of Mydaw alone there were eleven ships waiting only for the King Solomon with its eighty guns, and the Swallow with its hundred and ten, to set sail in pursuit of Robert Barthelemy as soon as the monsoons were over.

The tempest was raging, the sea tossed wildly, the black clouds hung so low that it seemed as if they nearly touched the waves, and the surges tossed their white foam upward toward the clouds.

The horizon was a dark violet blue, through which darted flashes of lightning. A ship was visible far away tossing on the billows, its closely furled sails and erect masts looking like black crosses.

It was the King Solomon, a proud warship, with three tiers of decks supplied with windows, which resembled a three-story

house with wings; but windows and portholes were now tightly closed.

The rain was pouring, black and white stormy petrels fluttered around the vessel, and ever and anon the waves tossed aloft one of the sharks swimming around the ship, which looked down greedily a moment, with its cold, fixed eyes, at the trembling sailors.

Every man had his hands full; in the midst stood Captain Trahern; the boldest of the crew were in the rigging, trying to secure the sails; others were attempting to rig a jury mast in place of one which had been carried away. Another group toiled at the pumps, and four men were at the helm, straining every muscle whenever a wave stronger than usual dashed against the bow of the ship. In the intervals of rest the sailors at the helm talked with one another.

"What a gale! It's impossible for us ever to reach port again."

"We came near sticking fast in the clouds just now, the waves flung us up so high."

"Lord help us! The thunderbolts are falling like ripe pears, one of us will be hit presently."

"Hush, don't you see the St. Elmo's fire yonder at the mast-head?" asked Philip, the helmsman.

"St. George preserve us!" whispered the others in horror. "That means evil. The St. Elmo's fire usually appears only on ships devoted to destruction. See how it dances!"

"Mind your helm!" shouted the captain, but it was too late; while the men were staring at the electrical phenomena hovering around the mast-head, a huge wave approached the ship, a wave which resembled a transparent mountain-chain in motion. Every effort to put the ship about proved futile, the vast surge, higher than the highest mast-head, rolled nearer, its top crested with foam. The men clung to the rigging and bulwarks. Suddenly the King Solomon rose more rapidly, tossed upward on the towering wave,

and the next moment lay on her side with her masts in the water and wave after wave sweeping over her decks. In a few minutes the ship righted again, the water rolling from her as it drips from the plumage of a swan, and the crew, drenched to the skin, returned to their tasks.

"See! The St. Elmo's fire is still shining at the mast-head!" cried Philip, "if it were not kindled by the devil, that flood of water would have put it out."

"Those stormy petrels suspect something wrong, too, they follow us everywhere."

"Jack says he saw the spectre ship last night."

"Is that true, Jack?"

"Why should I say so, if I hadn't seen it? You were all asleep, I stood alone at the helm. Suddenly, from the distance, the form of a ship moved toward us. It seemed scarcely to touch the water, and was sailing against the wind. Shadows that looked like men were moving about her deck as if pulling on the ropes, and a misty shape, like the captain, glided to and fro. Terrified, I hailed the apparition, and suddenly the whole vision vanished, but I heard distinctly, above the whistling of the wind and the plashing of the waves, the flapping of the ropes against the mast of the spectre ship."

"That means mischief."

The sailors gazed timidly at the cloud-veiled horizon, as they usually do when ghost stories are told in their presence.

"Look, look yonder!" said Philip, suddenly pointing into the gray mist, "I swear by St. George, I see the spectre ship!"

His messmates, panting for breath, followed the direction of his finger. The lightning flashed and they all made the sign of the cross.

"There it is."

"What do you see there?" called the captain, noticing the surprise of his men.

"The spectre ship, sir," one of them answered at last, trembling.

Trahern began to scan the vessel through his spy-glass.

"That's no spectre ship," he said after a short pause.

"What else could she be, sir? Would any mortal man carry sail in such a tempest? See how fast she approaches us! She does not heed the shock of the waves, but flies like a bird."

"That is no spectre ship," the captain repeated, "they are pirates."

"Living devils," muttered Philip.

"It must be Barthelemy," said Trahern. "What a pity that we cannot approach him, we would capture him at once. But who could fight in such a storm?"

The pirate swiftly approached the King Solomon. From time to time the waves concealed it, but the next instant it rose on their crests, still advancing.

"Those crazy fellows actually seem to be trying to meet us," said Trahern.

"Those are not men," replied Philip. "If men tried to cut through the waves in that fashion their ship would be battered to pieces."

The vessel really seemed to be pursuing the King Solomon; approaching it on one tack, it made every effort to come alongside, but was constantly baffled by the force of the waves which, like a stronger power, constantly tossed the two ships apart, and if they were within gunshot of each other at one moment, separated them the next by half a mile.

"Honest men pray to God at such times," cried Philip. "These do not even fear the gale. Ha! How that lightning blazed between the ships. The very fires of Heaven forbid approach."

The pirate suddenly furled her sails, and the next instant the crew of the King Solomon saw the large boat lowered. Twenty pirates sprang in and rowed toward the King Solomon.

The man-of-war had two hundred men and eighty guns; Trahern could not imagine what the object of these few people could be.

The waves tossed the boat to and fro but, spite of wind and water, the oarstrokes of the twenty men gradually brought it nearer. Then a gigantic figure stood erect, spite of the terrible tossing of the waves, and, raising a speaking trumpet to his lips, shouted in deep, ringing tones, "Captain Trahern, Robert Barthelemy hereby summons you to surrender at discretion the King Solomon and her crew."

The speaker was Skyrme.

Trahern, indignant at the audacity of the pirates, which bordered on insolence, ordered his men to fire on them. His gunners replied that the cannon were wet.

"That is a lie," shouted Trahern, "they are under cover. Take your weapons and crush these bold dogs."

"What?" shrieked Philip, "are these mortal men whom we can fight and kill? Did any one ever see a devil die? I'll fight with no fiends."

He flung down his arms as he spoke.

"Nor I, nor I!" shouted the rest of the crew, firing their weapons in the air and then throwing them down. Trahern found himself abandoned.

"And you will disgrace yourselves by surrendering to a force ten times smaller! Men! Come to your senses, these are no ghosts."

But no power on earth could have induced them to attack the corsairs, who were already fastening their grappling irons to the ship.

"Then I will defend the vessel alone," said the captain despairingly and, seizing a carbine, he discharged it among the buccaneers.

No one was hit, for his own men had struck up the weapon and would not let him aim at the assailants the second time.

A moment later the pirates were masters of the King Solomon.

The crew dared not resist them; their reputation for being able to accomplish whatever they desired had spread so far that the trembling seamen fairly lost their senses when they found themselves in the presence of people whom they regarded as beings from another world, and, even when they outstripped them tenfold in numbers, did not venture to offer any resistance.

If it were not for the existence of documents which prove it, no one would believe that twenty pirates, in a boat, amid the raging of a furious tempest, captured a man-of-war which had eighty guns, two hundred armed men, and a brave commander.

The eleven ships in the harbor of Mydaw were only awaiting the cessation of the monsoons and the arrival of the King Solomon to sail against Barthelemy.

The monsoons were still raging with the utmost fury when Robert Barthelemy entered the port, bringing the King Solomon in tow.

Black flags fluttered from every mast of the Royal Fortune and between her sails was stretched a square banner, on which was a hideous picture, a skeleton transfixed by a lance, holding an hour-glass in one hand, with its legs crossed and a bleeding heart at its feet. The Fox-Hound's standard, on the contrary, bore a man in a scarlet coat of mail, holding in his hand a flaming sword on whose point was a skull. The flag of St. George floated at her mast-head.

Amid the howling of the gale echoed the diabolical beating of drums and blare of trumpets of the captured band of the King Solomon, to whose accompaniment the pirates roared an ear-splitting song. So they sailed into the harbor.

The eleven ships all surrendered at the first shot. Barthelemy assembled all the captains on the Royal Fortune and gave them a

magnificent banquet, to which, after some little hesitation, they sat down, with the exception of one man, Fletcher, who positively declared that he would not sit at the pirates' table to eat and carouse with them. Barthelemy permitted him to do as he pleased, and he turned his back upon them.

Toward the end of the entertainment, when the wine began to excite them, Barthelemy became kindly disposed, and told the captains that they could redeem their ships by paying a ransom of eight pounds of gold dust.

They instantly consented, with the exception of Fletcher who again refused, saying that he would accept no favors from pirates, and would not purchase his ship at the cost of his honor; they might do with him whatever they chose. He spoke like a true Englishman.

Barthelemy instantly gave orders to fire Fletcher's ship and burn her with her whole cargo.

Asphlant undertook to execute the command, but soon returned to report that the ship's cargo consisted of eighty negro slaves and, as he did not know whether one could kindle negroes, he had come to ask what to do with them.

Barthelemy's eyes flashed with a fiendish delight.

"Negroes?" he asked, grinding his teeth, "Throw them into the sea, they must learn to swim."

Asphlant did not utter a syllable in reply, but went to execute the order. The revellers continued their carouse.

From time to time their conversation was interrupted by a blood-curdling death shriek, which silenced the bacchanalian songs for a moment and stopped the wine-cup on its way to their lips, but the next instant the talk was resumed.

The orgy was closed by an illumination furnished by the flames consuming Fletcher's ship, which lighted the whole harbor.

The negroes were chained together in couples, and the harbor swarmed with sharks. Whenever a pair was thrown into the sea the waves around were reddened; at each death shriek Barthelemy drained a glass of wine, muttering: "That is for the cottage in Hispaniola." The negroes were all murdered, but Barthelemy was not yet drunk.

The captains left him at a late hour, hoping that they might meet again. Barthelemy gave each a receipt for the ransom money which, preserved among other documents in the government archives, ran as follows:

We, the Knights of Fortune, hereby inform all whom it may concern, that we have received from Captain —— of the ship —— eight pounds of gold dust as ransom money, for which we released the said ship. Given under our hand and seal in the harbor of Mydaw, on the 13th of January, 1722.

Robert Barthelemy (Henry Glasby).

The storm was subsiding. A calm night followed. The moon rose, shedding a magical lustre upon the sea. Barthelemy stood on the deck of his ship with folded arms, gazing at the stars.

How much wine and blood he had poured to intoxicate himself, but all in vain. Neither wine nor blood gave him peace and forgetfulness. Ah, he could win no forgetfulness, that sweet unconsciousness of the soul, but instead came memory, the anguish of recalling the past.

The stars exert a magical power over the soul; whoever gazes at them long has it drawn whither it does not desire, whither it fears to go.

What did Barthelemy behold in those stars? He saw the years of his youth, painted in sweet, glimmering pictures, as unlike those of the present as if either the one or the other must be a dream.

There were the three girlish figures sporting around him, weaving garlands for his head, fastening them on with kisses, amid merry laughter. How softly the palms were whispering!

They sat together in the little house, the grandmother, in her armchair, telling marvelous, terrible tales of famous warriors; the young girls casting timid glances at the windows, where the darkness of the gathering night appeared, and the fire on the hearth died slowly, while William's heart began to swell with eager desire to battle with these unknown perils, and win for himself a name like those of the heroes glorified by tradition. How softly the palms were whispering!

The moon shone brilliantly. The moonlight nights of the South are brighter than the days of the North. His Julietta, clinging to him, murmured tenderly: "How I love you; we will live and die together." William's head sank on his breast, and he fancied he clasped in his arms the whole kingdom of heaven. How softly the palms were whispering!

The young girl sat on the green shore; her white kerchief fluttered in the wind as she waited every evening for the ship on which her lover had sailed, waited with yearning and prayers. How her heart leaped when, on the distant horizon, she fancied she recognized the slender masts that appeared before her, and measured in her imagination, a hundred times over, the space which yawned between them. Her bosom heaved, her soul burned with joy and, as it came nearer and nearer, she threw kisses—

"What ship is that?" shouted Moody's harsh, strident tones close beside Barthelemy.

Roused from his waking dream, he cast a half startled, half angry glance at the speaker.

"What ship do you mean?"

"The one at which you have been looking steadily for half an hour, the sail appearing yonder on the horizon."

Barthelemy now, for the first time, noticed a vessel whose outlines had blended with the ship seen in his dream, and which seemed to be swiftly approaching.

"Oho! Off with the Fox-Hound!" he cried. "Forward, my lads!"

"Not to-night," shouted one of the crew from the other ship, "the Royal Fortune ought to go. You have drunk enough, we are sober; and even my grandfather's spook wouldn't fight sober."

"What talk is this?"

"The talk that came to us to-night from the rum and sugar, when even the fish got punch from the Royal Fortune."

"You rascals, do I manufacture sugar and brandy that you ask me for it? When the supply is exhausted, get more. Wherever a Portuguese galleon appears on the horizon, you can find all the sugar you want. Follow her and drink your fill."

Meanwhile the vessel had come so near that they could count all her sails in the bright moonbeams; then she tacked and began to recede.

"Follow her!" shouted Barthelemy; "See, she has discovered us and wants to escape. Skyrme, quick, don't let her elude us. Up, up, to the chase my lads!"

The Fox-Hound instantly unfurled every sail; the crew of the larger ship, greedy for prey, rushed on her deck and, aided by a favorable wind, the pursuit of the unknown ship began, which, overhauled more and more by the Fox-Hound, soon disappeared with it below the horizon.

The fugitive was the Swallow, the formidable English man-of-war, commanded by two of the bravest captains, David Oyle and—Rolls.

When Barthelemy had captured all the ships that had been sent against him, the Swallow sailed out alone to seek and conquer him.

On reaching the harbor, they saw in the distance the pirate ships, which were easily recognized, and wanted to attack them at once, but were obliged first to sail around a large shoal known as the "French Sand-bank," and the pirates, mistaking this circuit for flight, rushed in pursuit.

The Swallow merely sailed far enough out to sea to lure the Fox-Hound to a point where the cannonading could not be heard on land, and then allowed herself to be overtaken.

Suddenly the pirates, with loud shouts, ran up the black flag and dashed with the speed of an arrow toward the Swallow. Skyrme stood in the bow, holding his grappling iron ready.

"Barthelemy and death!" roared the whole band.

At the same moment the cannon of the British ship, with a terrible thunder, sent a devastating volley upon the deck of the Fox-Hound, veiling her in a cloud of smoke.

As soon as it lifted, the pirates were seen standing as if dazed by the thunderbolt which had fallen upon them. The deck was strewn with mangled corpses, the black flag was shot from the mast. Skyrme alone had retained his presence of mind.

"Forward, you knaves!" he roared furiously, "what are you staring at? Up with the flag again, and throw your grappling irons."

The pirates quickly hauled up the flag, and Skyrme's stentorian voice shouted: "Forward!"

A second volley thundered down upon them from the British cannon. The flag fell a second time, and with it Skyrme, whose legs were torn off by a cannon ball. The pirates lost their self-control, and rushing to the man at the helm, forced him to turn and spread their sails for flight.

"Do not yield," roared Skyrme, clinging to the mast. "Shame and disgrace upon you! Stick to the ship, and rush upon her decks. Die the death of heroes!"

The pirates, with a last outburst of daring, began to urge the Fox-Hound toward the Swallow, and had almost succeeded in reaching it with their grappling irons, when a third volley echoed on the air. The main-mast was shattered and fell with all the rigging, into the sea.

They were lost. They could fight no longer.

"Throw the flag into the water that it may not fall into the hands of the enemy!" gasped Skyrme, only half of whose gigantic body remained. "Go to the powder room and fire among the kegs!"

Five pirates, with loaded pistols, instantly leaped below, and at the end of a minute, with a roar like thunder, a cloud of smoke rose into the air; otherwise there was no harm done. There was not powder enough to shatter the ship. The five pirates lay in the hold, burnt and swearing, as black as if they had been transformed into devils in advance. The explosion threw the helmsman flat on the deck and, as if he had no other care on his mind, he screamed for his hat, which had gone overboard.

The Englishmen instantly took possession of the wreck, whose deck was strewn with the dead and wounded.

The latter were raised and cared for.

"Don't touch me!" shrieked Skyrme in a frenzy of rage, and seizing a sabre in each hand he began a desperate struggle. The bravest soldiers could scarcely succeed in disarming the mangled giant, who, when his huge hands were chained in order to bind up his wounds, tore off the bandages with his fetters and, by a last tremendous exertion of strength, burst them and—died.

Meanwhile, in order not to waste time, Barthelemy captured a ship coming from India. Her captain, Jonathan Hill, was a jovial fellow who, accepting the pirate's invitation, sat down to breakfast with him, became very friendly after his first glass of wine, and when the second was emptied, asked the company to drink for a wager, in which contest he vowed to land them all under the table.

During this noble rivalry every man was called upon for his favorite song. Hill had two or three.

"Now let us have *your* favorite, Barthelemy!" he said at last, turning to the pirate chief.

"I cannot sing," replied Barthelemy.

"Oho! But you ought at least to learn the one which is being sung everywhere about you; for instance this:

"Far, far away the white dove flies,
In fierce pursuit the black hawk hies;
The dove is my lover so dear,
The hawk is the pirate I fear."

Barthelemy shuddered.

"Where did you hear that song?"

"Ha! ha! my friend, from a wonderfully beautiful girl, of whom your soul must not even dream; it's a pity that she was in love with someone else."

"Speak! when? where?"

"Well, it was a romantic adventure. I had just anchored off the coast of Hispaniola when the negroes in San Domingo rose against their masters. I had gone on shore with twenty men to get some fresh water, when I heard a shriek in the distance. 'Let's go there!' I said to my companions, 'we'll help if there is need'; and seizing our guns we rushed toward the sound. Three young girls came from behind the hill, pursued by three hundred negroes. The black rascals, shouting and yelling, were fast gaining upon them. The girls could not run fast enough, for they were dragging a large armchair in which sat an old woman. 'Fire!' I shouted, and we sent a volley among the black devils. They scattered, and before they could gather again, we had seized the poor hunted women and rushed to our boats with them. The beautiful girl was as light as a bird, I can tell you. I could have carried her in my arms to the ends of the earth."

"Go on," whispered Barthelemy in an almost unintelligible tone.

"Aha, you are interested in hearing of a beautiful girl? And she thought of you, too, but how? She wrote the song about you, which is not particularly flattering. It seems she had a lover, who had gone on a long voyage and, as she was constantly afraid you would do the poor fellow some mischief, she added whenever she prayed for him the entreaty that God would sink Robert Barthelemy in the depths of the sea. Poor girl, how she loved that man! She asked every sailor we met if he had seen the ship on which William went. My heart ached for her. I left her in Dublin. I don't know whether she has found her lover."

Barthelemy's face had gradually blanched to a corpse-like pallor, his eyes were fixed on vacancy and a strange smile rested on his ghastly face.

"See how the captain is smiling, he has gone crazy!" whispered the pirates, starting up in alarm.

"What has happened to you?" exclaimed Hill, striking Barthelemy on the shoulder. The latter started at the touch, and a look of profound, unutterable sadness drove the smile from his face.

Rising from the table, he grasped Hill by the hand, drew him aside, slipped his arm into his, and walking forward to the bow of the ship, said in a stifled voice:

"Captain, this is the last day of my life! I feel, I know it. You must not ask why. That is my own affair. The pirate has his superstitions as well as the rest of the world. The sailor knows that he is doomed when he meets the spectre of the sea. My soul has such a spectre, and I encountered it to-day. I know not how or where, but I shall fall. In the hold of the captured King Solomon there are ten thousand pounds sterling in gold dust; if I fall, take it—as compensation for your stolen property."

Hill gazed at him from head to foot, and then returned to the others.

"Your captain is so drunk that he doesn't know what he is talking about."

An hour later most of the pirates lay intoxicated under the tables, only two or three remaining erect, disputing the wager with Jonathan Hill, when the man at the helm shouted:

"Sail in sight!"

The cry sobered some of the pirates and, staggering forward, they recognized in the approaching vessel the ship seen the night before.

A strange dread took possession of them all. They hastily shook their drunken messmates from their dreams, pointed to the ship, and hurried to Barthelemy with the tidings. The latter noticed the terror in their faces, and said coldly:

"That is certainly the Portuguese sugar maker which fled from the Fox-Hound yesterday and, in trying to escape into some harbor, has now run between two fires."

"That's no Portuguese trader, sir," said one of the pirates in a trembling voice. "Before I deserted to you, I served on that ship and know her well. It is the Swallow."

"Well?" said Barthelemy, smiling scornfully, "and suppose she is, would my men be too cowardly to meet her?"

"She has one hundred and ten guns and is one of the best sailers in the navy."

"That makes no difference. Who are her captains?"

"One is named David Oyle—the other Rolls."

"Rolls!" repeated Barthelemy starting. "So my presentiment was true. Up, my men! Beat the drums, show the flags, spread every inch of canvas, prepare for the battle! Fear nothing, the god of war is on our side."

The buccaneers seized their weapons, the gunners went to their stations, and Barthelemy withdrew for a few moments to his cabin.

He soon reappeared, wearing on his head a broad-brimmed hat, with a long scarlet plume fastened with a ruby buckle; his costume, studded with gems, was girdled with a Persian shawl; around his neck hung a broad gold chain, sustaining a glittering diamond cross, and in his belt were thrust pistols whose handles were set with pearls. So he came forth, haughty in bearing and magnificently clad, like a bridegroom going to his marriage banquet.

The eyes of all the pirates were fixed upon him. Every one had the firmest belief that nothing was impossible for Barthelemy.

The latter beckoned to Moody and whispered in his ear:

"Old comrade, I need not tell you that this will be the hour of greatest peril which we have ever experienced. We must hold by each other. I have decided to approach the enemy with all sail set, receiving and returning his fire. If he dismasts us, we will try to escape to land; if that fails, we will grapple the enemy and blow both ships into the air."

"Very well," muttered the old pirate, clenching his pipe between his teeth.

"One thing more, Moody. If I should fall, throw my body into the sea. I want to rest on the bottom of the ocean."

The pirate bent his head and growled: "Very well."

Then each man went to his post. Barthelemy drew his sword and, raising his head proudly, cried: "Raise the anchors."

The order was obeyed, the wind filled the sails, and the two ships, with their flags fluttering in the breeze, rapidly approached each other.

On arriving within a certain distance, both turned suddenly. The Swallow fired first, sixty guns thundering at the same instant. The

Royal Fortune reserving her fire, did not lose a single sail, and only three of her men fell.

"Up and at them!" shouted Barthelemy, "the advantage is ours"; and as he spoke his forty guns returned the volley of the Swallow, which rocked heavily under the shock.

Just at that moment the report of a pistol echoed from the Swallow's deck and Barthelemy sank lifeless on a cannon. The bullet had pierced his heart.

The man at the helm, Stephenson, saw him fall and, not perceiving the wound, shouted:

"Don't lie down, captain, but look the danger boldly in the face and fight as beseems a man."

Even as he spoke a jet of blood gushed from Barthelemy's breast.

Stephenson, seeing it, leaped from his post in despair, leaving his place at the helm, and throwing himself on Barthelemy's body shouted, sobbing aloud: "He is dead!"

The cry fairly paralyzed the pirates just at the critical moment; nameless terror filled their hearts, and all rushed to their captain's corpse.

Moody thrust them aside right and left till he reached the body, and hastily seizing it, he threw it over the bulwark into the sea.

With Barthelemy, the moving spirit of the pirates fled. Throwing down their weapons, they surrendered. No man knew exactly what he was doing; they sank like a headless body.

Scudamore was the only one who thought of anything. He recognized Rolls on the other ship and, seizing a lighted slow-match, rushed to the powder magazine, but met Henry Glasby standing with a drawn sword at the door.

"What are you doing here?" he shrieked.

"Keeping you back," replied Glasby, wrenching the match from his hand and stamping out the light.

"Oho! Asphlant, Moody, here!" shouted Scudamore. "Here is a traitor. Help me break into the powder magazine."

An uproar followed. Some of the pirates wanted to blow up the ship, others opposed it, and while the two parties were contending Glasby poured water into the kegs, so that the powder was useless.

An hour after the whole crew were prisoners.

Chapter IV

Retribution

The foaming wine is drained from the cup, nothing remains but the dregs, which we will also empty.

During the battle Captain Hill released himself and his ship and, taking possession of the pirates' money, sailed away.

The buccaneers, prisoners on board their own ship, were taken to Cape Corso, but not even this disaster could subdue them. The injured men would not allow their wounds to be bandaged, and when they were put in irons, beat their aching, bleeding wounds with their chains, and died uttering imprecations, reconciled neither to God nor man. The others sang wild buccaneer songs and irritated their guards with sneering jests.

Weighing the ration of bread in his hand one of them said, laughing: "You want us to dry up to save hemp; we shall get so thin on this fare that you can hang us by a thread of yarn."

They were chained together in couples. One began to sing and pray; his companion gave him a violent thrust in the side.

"What do you expect to gain by that?" he asked.

"The Kingdom of Heaven," replied the other humbly.

"You? The Kingdom of Heaven? You passed that port long ago with the rest of us. We're sailing for hell. The captain is already waiting for us, and we shall enter according to our rank, and when we run into harbor there we'll salute him with a salvo of thirteen shots. Hurrah for Barthelemy and his luck."

The poor, penitent sinner did not stop singing and praying, spite of the oaths of his companion, till the latter, in all seriousness, begged the captain of the ship to relieve them from this fellow, whose howling disturbed the good-humor of the others, and who had proved himself unworthy of such distinguished company; or at

any rate, for the maintenance of order, to take away his prayer-book.

The most dangerous members of the pirate band were kept prisoners on the Swallow, and among them were Moody and Asphlant. The latter formed a plot to escape from their confinement some night, kill both the captains, and form a still more powerful buccaneer crew.

One of them, however, deemed it advisable to save himself at the expense of the others and betrayed the plan. The prisoners had already managed to file through their chains. Afterwards they were watched day and night.

Scudamore had been left on the Royal Fortune, where he was permitted liberty to move about to care for the wounded pirates, so far as they would permit.

One night Scudamore instigated them to free themselves with his aid, and die fighting rather than be executed. The conspiracy was discovered at the moment of the outbreak and, that it might not be repeated, on reaching the land a trial was held at once in order to make short work of the pirates.

They were divided into two classes, one containing the officers, the other the men; the former had ordered everything, the latter had merely executed their commands. The first was jestingly called the Upper House. The trial of the Upper House ended badly. All were condemned to death; among them Moody, Asphlant, Simpson and Scudamore. Only one was acquitted—Henry Glasby. His noble character was known by reputation; many owed their lives and property to his intercession; he had often attempted, at the risk of his life, to escape from the pirates, but was always captured. The court released him. At last he could join his promised bride.

The end of the notorious band of pirates was noised abroad throughout the entire world. Three young girls went in turn to every church in Dublin, offering grateful thanks to Heaven for having heard their petitions and sunk the terrible corsair king in

the sea. Then, in a whisper, they added: "And protect our beloved William, restore him to us."

Robert Barthelemy lay a hundred fathoms beneath the waves amid the coral and sea-shells.

The End

EDITION NOTE

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