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MODERN CHIVALRY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF REDWOOD.

"But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or the body---and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low---Oh, my leddy, then it is'na what we hae dune for oursells, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly."---*Heart of Midlothian*.

THE assertion that a tale is founded on fact, is a pious fraud of story tellers, too stale to impose on any but the very young, or very credulous. We hope therefore, not to be suspected of resorting to an expedient that would expose our poverty without relieving it, when we declare that the leading incidents of the following tale are true—that they form, in that district of country where some of the circumstances transpired, a favourite and well authenticated tradition—and that our hero boasts with well-earned self-complacency, that there is no name better known than his from 'Cape May to the Head of Elk.' That name, however honourable as it is, must be suppressed, and we here honestly beg the possessor's pardon for compelling him, for the first time in his life, to figure under false colours.

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In the year 1768, an American vessel lying in the Thames and bound to Oxford, a small sea-port on the eastern shore of Maryland, was hailed by a boat containing a youth, who, on

presenting himself to the captain, stated that he had a fancy for a sailor's life, and offered his services for two years, on the simple condition of kind treatment. The captain, though himself a coarse illiterate man, perceived in the air and language of the lad indications of good breeding, and deeming him some disobedient child, or possibly a runaway apprentice, declined receiving him. But William Herion, as he called himself, was so earnest in his solicitations, and engaging in his manners, and the captain, withal, in pressing need of a cabin-boy, that he waved his scruples, quieted his conscience with the old opiate that it was best not to be more nice than wise, and without inquiring too curiously into the boy's right of self-disposal, drew up some indentures, by which he entitled himself to two years' service.

The boy was observed for the first day to wear a troubled countenance. His eye glanced around with incessant restlessness, as if in eager search of some expected object. While the ship glided down the Thames, he gazed on the shore as if he looked for some signal on which his life depended, and when she passed Gravesend, the last point of embarkation, he wept convulsively. The captain believed him to be dis-

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turbed with remorse of conscience; the sailors, that these heart-breakings were lingerings for his native land, and all hinted their rude consolations. Soothed by their friendly efforts, or by his own reflections, or perhaps following the current of youth that naturally flows to happiness, William soon became tranquil, and sometimes even gay. He kept, as the sailors said, on the fair weather side of the captain, a testy, self-willed old man, who loved but three things in the world—his song, his glass, and his own way.

All that had been fabled of the power of music over stones and brutes, was surpassed by the effect of the lad's melting voice on the icy heart of the captain, whom fifty years of absolute

power had rendered as despotic as a Turkish Pacha. When their old commander blew his stiffest gale, as the sailors were wont to term his blustering passions, Will could, they said, sing him into a calm. Will of course became a doting piece to the whole ship's company. They said he was a trim built lad, too neat and delicate a piece of workmanship for the stormy sea. They laughed at his slender fingers, fitter to manage threads than ropes, passed many jokes upon his soft blue eyes and fair round cheeks, and in their rough language expressed Sir Toby's prayer, that "Jupiter in his next commodity of hair, would send the boy a beard." In the main Will bore their jokes without flinching, and returned them with even measure; but sometimes when they verged to rudeness, his rising blush or a tear

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stealing from his downcast eye, expressed an instinctive and unsullied modesty, whose appeal touched the best feelings of these coarse men.

The ship made a prosperous voyage, and in due time arrived off the American coast. It is a common custom with sailors to greet the first sight of land with a sacrifice to Bacchus. The natural and legalized revel was as extravagant on this, as it usually is on similar occasions. The captain with unwonted good humour, dealt out the liquor most liberally to the crew, and bade William sing them his best songs. Will obeyed, and song after song, and glass after glass carried them, as they said, far above high water mark. Their language and manners became intolerable to William, and he endeavoured to steal away with the intention of hiding himself in the cabin, till the revel was over. One of the sailors suspecting his design, caught him rudely and swore he would detain him in his arms. William struggled, freed himself, and darted down the companion way, the men following and shouting.

The captain stood at the entrance of the cabin door. William sunk down at his feet terrified and exhausted, and screaming “protect me—oh! For the love of heaven, protect me.”

The captain demanded the occasion of the uproar, and ordered the men to stand back. They, however, stimulated to reckless courage, and in sight of the land and independence, no longer feared his authority, and

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they swore that they would not be balked of their frolic. Poor Will, already feeling their hands upon him, clung in terror to the captain, and one fear overcoming another, confessed that his masculine dress was a disguise, and wringing his hands with shame and anguish, supplicated protection as a helpless girl.

The sailors touched with remorse and pity, retreated; but the brutal captain spurned the trembling suppliant with his foot, swearing a round oath that it was the first time he had been imposed on, and it should be the last. Unfortunately the old man, priding himself on his sagacity, was as confident of his own infallibility as the most devoted Catholic is of the Pope’s. This was his last voyage, and after playing Sir Oracle, for forty years—to have been palpably deceived—incontrovertibly outwitted by a girl of fifteen, was a mortification that his vanity could not brook. He swore he would have his revenge, and most strictly did he perform his vow. He possessed a plantation in the vicinity of Oxford; thither he conveyed the unhappy girl, and degraded her to the rank of a common servant, among the negro slaves in his kitchen.

The captain’s wrath was magnified, by the stranger’s persisting in refusing to disclose the motive of her deception, to reveal her family, or even to tell her name. Her new acquaintance were at a loss what to call her, till the captain’s daughter, who had been

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on a visit to Philadelphia, and seen the Winter's Tale performed there, bestowed on her the pretty appellation of Hermione's lost child, Perdita.

The captain, a common case, was the severest sufferer by his own passions. His wife complained that his "venture," as she provokingly styled poor Perdita, was a useless burden on her household—"a fine lady born and bred, like feathers, and flowers, and French goods, pretty to look at, but fit for no use in the world." The captain's daughters partly instigated by compassion, and partly by the striking contrast between the delicate graces of the stranger and their own buxom beauty, incessantly teased their father to send her back to her own country; and neighbours and acquaintances were forever letting fall some observation on the beauty of the girl, or some allusion to her story, that was a spark of fire to the captain's gunpowder temper.

Weeks and months rolled heavily on without a dawn of hope to poor Perdita. She was too young and inexperienced herself, to contrive any mode of relief, and no one was likely to undertake voluntarily the difficult enterprise of rescuing her from her thralldom. Her condition was thus forlorn, when her story came to the ears of Frank Stuart, a gallant young sailor on board the Hazard, a vessel lying in the stream off Oxford, and on the eve of sailing for Cowes in the Isle of Wight. Frank stood deservedly high in the confidence of his commander, and on [11]

Sunday, the day preceding that appointed for the departure of the ship, he obtained leave to go on shore. His youthful imagination was excited by the story of the oppressed stranger, and he strolled along the beach in the direction of her master's plantation, in the hope of gratifying his curiosity by a glimpse of her. As he approached the house, he perceived that the front blinds were closed, and inferring thence that the family were absent, he ventured within the bounds of the plantation, and saw at no great distance from him a young female sitting on a bench beneath

a tree. She leaned her head against its trunk, with an air of dejectedness and abstraction, that encouraged the young man to hope he had already attained his object. As he approached nearer, the girl started from her musings and would have retreated to the house, but suddenly inspired by her beauty and youth with a resolution to devote himself to her service, he besought her to stop for one instant and listen to him. She turned and gazed at him as if she would have perused his heart. Frankness and truth were written on his face by the finger of heaven. She could not fear any impertinence from him, and farther assured by his respectful manner, when he added, "I have something particular to say to you—but we must luff and bear away, for we are in too plain sight of the look out there," and he pointed to the house—she smiled and followed him to a more secluded part of the grounds. As soon as he was sure

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of being beyond observation, "Do you wish," he asked with professional directness, "to return to old England?"

She could not speak, but she clasped her hands, and the tears gushed like an open fountain from her eyes—"you need not say any more—you need not say any more," he exclaimed, for he felt every tear to be a word spoken to his heart—"If you will trust me," he continued, "I swear, and so God help me as I speak the truth, I will treat you as if you were my sister. Our ship sails to-morrow morning at day light, make a tight bundle of your rigging, and meet me at twelve o'clock to-night at the gate of the plantation. Will you trust me?"

"Heaven has sent you to me," replied the poor girl, her face brightening with hope, "and I will not fear to trust you."

They then separated—Perdita to make her few preparations, and Frank to contrive the means of executing his romantic enterprise.

Precisely at the appointed hour the parties met at the place of rendezvous. Perdita was better furnished for her voyage than could have been anticipated, from the duration she had suffered. A short notice and a scant wardrobe, were never known to oppose an obstacle to a heroine's compassing sea and land; but as we have dispensed with the facilities of fiction, we are bound to account for Perdita's being in possession of the necessaries of life, and it is due to the

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captain's daughter to state, that her feminine sympathy had moved her from time to time to grant generous supplies to Perdita, which our heroine did not fail to acknowledge on going away, by a letter enclosing a valuable ring.

A few whispered sentences of caution, assurance and gratitude, were reciprocated by Frank and Perdita, as they bent their hasty steps to the landing-place where he had left his boat; and when he had handed her into it, and pushed from the shore on to his own element, he felt the value of the trust which this beautiful young creature had reposed to him. Never in the days of knightly deeds was there a sentiment of purer chivalry, than that which inspired the determined resolution and romantic devotion of the young sailor. He was scarcely twenty, the age of fearless project, and self-confidence. How soon is the one checked by disappointments—the other humbled by experience of the infirmity of human virtue!

Stuart had not confided his designs to any of his shipmates. He was therefore obliged warily to approach the ship, and to get on board with the least possible noise. He had just time to secrete Perdita amidst bales of tobacco, in the darkest place in the hold of the vessel, when a call of "all hands on deck," summoned him to duty. He was foremost at his post, and all was stir and bustle to get the vessel under way. The sails were hoisted—the anchor

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weighed, and all in readiness, when a signal was heard from the shore, and presently a boat filled with men seen approaching. The men proved to be Perdita's master, a sheriff, and his attendants. They produced a warrant empowering them to search the vessel. The old captain affirmed that the girl had been seen on the preceding day, talking with a young spark, who was known to have come on shore from the Hazard. In his fury he foamed at the mouth, swore he would have the runaway dead or alive, and that her aider and abettor should be given over to condign punishment. The master of the Hazard declared, that if any of his men were found guilty, he would resign them to the dealings of land law, and to prove if there was a plot, he was quite innocent, but he not only freely abandoned his vessel to the search, but himself was most diligent in the inquest. The men were called up, confronted and examined; not one appeared more cool and unconcerned than Frank Stuart, and after every inquiry, after ransacking as they believed, in every possible place of concealment, the pursuers were compelled to withdraw, baffled and disappointed.

The vessel proceeded on her voyage.—Frank requested the captain's permission to swing a hammock alongside his birth, on the pretence that the birth was rendered damp and unwholesome by a leak in the deck above it. The reasonable petition was of course granted, and when night had closed watch-

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ful eyes, and dropped her friendly veil, so essential to the clandestine enterprises of the most ingenious, Frank rescued Perdita from a position, in which she had suffered not only the inconveniences, but the terrors of an African slave; and wrapping her in his own dreadnought, and drawing his watchcap over her bright luxuriant hair, he conducted her past the open door of the captain's state-room, and past his sleeping companions, to his own birth; then whispering to

her, “that she was safe as a ship in harbour,” he gave her some bread and a glass of wine, for which he had bartered his allowance of spirits, and laid himself down in his own hammock, to the companionship of such thoughts as are ministering angels about the pillow of the virtuous.

The following day a storm arose—a storm still remembered, as the most terrible and disastrous that ever occurred in Chesapeake Bay. There were several passengers of consequence on board the Hazard, among others two deacons who were going to the mother country to receive orders—for then, we of the colonies, who have since taken all rights into our own hands, dared not exercise the rights God had given us, without the assent of the Lords Bishops. Night came on, the storm increased, and then, when the ship was in extremity, when death howled in every blast, when “the timid shrieked and the brave stood still”—then was the unwearied activity, the exhaustless invention, and the unconquerable re-

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solution of Frank Stuart, the last human support and help of the unhappy crew. The master of the Hazard was advanced in life, and unnerved by the usual feebleness and timidity of age. He had but just enough presence of mind left, to estimate the masterly conduct of young Stuart, and he abandoned the command of the vessel to him, and retired to what is too often only a last resource—to prayers with the churchmen.

Once or twice Stuart disappeared from the deck, ran to whisper a word of encouragement to his trembling charge, and then returned with renewed vigour to his duty. Owing, under Providence, to his exertions, the Hazard rode out a storm which filled the seaman’s annals with many a tale of terror. Gratitude is too apt to rest in second causes, in the visible means of deliverance, and perhaps an undue portion was now felt towards the intrepid youth. The passengers lavished their favours on him—they supplied his meals with the most delicate wines

and fruits, and the choicest viands from their own stores; he, with the superstition characteristic of his profession, firmly believed that heaven had sent the storm to unlock their hearts to him, and thus afford him the means of furnishing Perdita with dainties suited to her delicate appetite, so that she fared, as he afterwards boasted, like the daughter of a king in her father's palace.

Stuart was kept in a state of perpetual alarm by the mate of the vessel. He knew that this fellow, one

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of those imbeciles that bend like a reed before a strong blast, had been hostile to him ever since the storm, when the accidental superiority of his station had been compelled to bow to Frank's superior genius. He was aware that the mate had, by malicious insinuations, estranged the captain from him, and he was but too certain that he should have nothing to hope, if his secret were discovered by this base man. Perhaps this apprehension gave him an air of unwonted constraint in the presence of his enemy; certain it is, the mate's eye often rested on him with an expression of eager watchfulness and suspicion, and Stuart, perceiving it, would contract his brow and compress his lips, in a way that betrayed how hard he strove with his rising passion. The difficulty of concealment was daily increasing, as one after another of his messmates, either from some inevitable accident, or from a communication becoming necessary on his part, obtained possession of his secret. But his ascendancy over them was complete, and by threats or persuasions, he induced them all to promise inviolable secrecy. There is an authority in a determined spirit, to which men naturally do homage. It is heaven's own charter of a power, to which none can refuse submission.

Frank never permitted his comrades to approach Perdita, or to speak a word to her; but in the depths of the night, when the mate's and the old captain's senses were locked in sleep, he would bring her forth

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to breathe the fresh air. Seated on the gunwale, she would bestow on him the only reward in her gift—the treasures of her sweet voice; and Frank said the winds sat still in the sails to listen.

There were times when not a human sound was heard in the ship, when these two beings, borne gently on by the tides in mid ocean, felt as if they were alone in the universe.

It was at such times that Frank felt an irrepressible curiosity to know something more of the mysterious history of Perdita, whose destiny heaven, he believed, had committed to his honour; and once he ventured to introduce the topic nearest his heart, by saying, “you bade me call you Perdita, but I do not like the name; it puts me too much in mind of those rodomontade novels, that turn the girls' heads and set them asailing, as it were, without chart or compass, in quest of unknown worlds”—He hesitated; it was evident he had betaken himself to a figure, to avoid an explicit declaration of his wishes—after a moment's pause he added—“it suits me best to be plain-spoken—it is not the name that I object to so much, but—but, hang it—I think you know Frank Stuart now, well enough to trust him with your real name.”

The unhappy girl cast down her eyes, and said “that Perdita suited her better than any other name.”

“Then you will not trust me?”

“Say not so, my noble, generous friend,” she ex-

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claimed—“trust you!—have I not trusted you!—you know that I would trust you with any thing that was my own—but my name—my father’s name, I have forfeited by my folly.”

“Oh no—that you shall not say—a brave ship is not run down with a light breeze, and a single folly of a young girl cannot sink a good name—a folly!” he continued, thus indirectly pushing inquiries, “if it is a folly, it’s a common one—there’s many a stouter heart than your’s, that’s tried to face a gale of love, and been obliged to bear about and scud before the wind.”

“Who told you?—how did you discover?” demanded Perdita in a hurried, alarmed manner.

Frank’s generous temper disdained to surprise the unwary girl into confidence, and he immediately surrendered the advantage he had gained. “Nobody has told me,” he said—“I have discovered nothing—I only guessed, as the yankees say—now wipe away your tears—the sea wants no more salt water, and believe me Frank Stuart has not such a woman’s spirit in him, that he cannot rest content without knowing a secret.”

In spite of Frank’s manly resolution, he did afterwards repeatedly intimate the longings of his curiosity, but they were always met with such unaffected distress on the part of Perdita, that he said he had not the heart to press them.

As the termination of the voyage approached,

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Stuart became more intensely anxious lest his secret should be discovered. Stuart became more intensely anxious lest his secret should be discovered. The mildest consequence would be, that he should forfeit his wages. That he cared not for—like Goldsmith’s poor soldier, he could lie on a bare board, and thank God he was so well off. “While he had youth and health,” he said, “and there was a ship afloat on the wide sea, he was provided for.” But his companions who had been

true to him might forfeit their pay; for, by their fidelity to him, they had in some measure become his accessories. But he found consolation even under this apprehension; “the honest lads,” he said, “would soon make a full purse empty, but the memory of a good action was a treasure gold could not buy—a treasure that would stick by them forever—a treasure for the port of heaven.” There was, however, one apprehended evil, for which his philosophy offered no antidote.

He was sure the captain would deem it his duty, or make it his will, (even Frank’s slight knowledge of human nature told him that will and duty were too often convertible terms,) to return the fugitive to her soi-disant master in Maryland. Nothing could exceed the vigilance with which he watched every movement and turn that threatened a detection, or the ingenuity with which he evaded every circumstance that tended to it—but alas! the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

One night when it was blowing a gale, a particular

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rope was wanted, which the mate remembered to have stowed away in the steerage. Frank eagerly offered to search for it, but the mate was certain that no one but himself could find it, and taking a lantern he went in quest of it. Frank followed him with fear and trembling. He has since been in many a desperate sea-fight, but he declares he never felt so much like a coward as at that moment. The mate’s irritable humour had been somewhat stirred by Frank’s persisting in his offer, to go for the rope, and when he turned and saw him at his heels, he asked him angrily, “what he was dogging him for?” “The ship rolls so heavily,” replied Frank in a subdued tone, “that I thought you might want me to hold the lantern for you.” Frank’s unwonted meekness quite conciliated the mate, and though he rejoined, “I think I have been used to the rolling of a

ship a little longer than you, young man,” he spoke good-naturedly, and Frank ventured to proceed.

Most fortunately, as Frank thought, the mate directed his steps to the side of the ship opposite Perdita, but making a little circuit in his return, he passed between Frank’s hammock and Perdita’s berth. At this moment the poor lad’s heart, as he afterwards averred, stopped beating. The ship rolled on that side, and the mate catching hold of the berth to save himself from falling, exclaimed, “In heaven’s name what lazy devil is here, when every hand is wanted on deck;” and raising his lantern to identify

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the supposed delinquent sailor, he discovered the beautiful girl. For a moment he was dumb with amazement, but soon recalling the search at Oxford, the whole truth flashed upon him: he turned to Frank, and shaking his fist in his face, “Ah, this is you, Stuart!” he said, and enforced his gesture with a horrible oath.

“Yes,” retorted Frank, now standing boldly forth, “it is me, thank God”—and then drawing a curtain that he had arranged before Perdita’s berth, he bade her fear nothing.

“Oh Frank,” she exclaimed, “I cannot fear where you are.” This involuntary expression of confidence went to her protector’s heart. There is no man so dead to sentiment, as not to be touched by the trust of woman, especially if she be young and beautiful. Frank was at the age when sentiment is absolute, and he was resolved to secure his treasure at every hazard. Perdita’s declaration, while it stimulated his zeal, awakened the mean jealousies of the mate.

“And so my pretty miss,” he said, “you fear nothing where this fellow is—I can tell you, for all that he may boast, and you may believe, he is neither master nor mate yet, and please the Lord I’ll prove as much to him this very night.”

“And how will you prove it?” asked Stuart, in a voice which, though as calm as he could make it, resembled the low growl of a bull dog before he springs on his victim.

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“I’ll prove it, my lad, by telling the whole story of your smuggled goods to the captain. A pretty piece of work this, to be carried on under the nose of your officers. It’s no better than a mutiny, for I’ll warrant it the whole ship’s crew are leagued with you.”

Stuart reined in his passions, and condescended to expostulate. He represented to the mate that he could gain nothing by giving information to the captain. He described with his simple eloquence, the oppression the poor girl had already suffered; the cruelty of disappointing her present hopes, just as they were on the point of being realized, for the ship was not more than twenty-four hours sail from Cowes; he appealed to his compassion, his generosity, his manliness, but in vain, he found no accessible point. The mean pride of having discovered the secret, and the pleasure of humbling Stuart, mastered every good feeling of the mate, if indeed he possessed any, and he turned away, saying with a sort of chuckling exultation, “that he should go and do his duty.”

“Stop,” cried Frank, grasping his arm with a gripe that threatened to crush it. “Stop and hear me—I swear by him that made me, if you dare so much as to hint by word, look or movement, the secret you have discovered here, you shall not cumber the earth another day—day—said I—no, not an hour—I’ll send you to the devil as swift as a canon ball ever went to the mark—Look,” he continued, tearing away the

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curtain he had just drawn before Perdita—"could any thing short of the malice of Satan himself contrive to harm such helpless innocence as that—do you hear me"—he added in a voice that outroared the storm—"in God's name look at me, and see I am in earnest."

The mate had no doubt to satisfy, he trembled like an aspen leaf—in vain he essayed to raise his eyes, the passion that glanced in Frank's face, and dilated his whole figure, affected the trembling wretch like a stroke of the sun. He reeled in Frank's iron grasp, his abject fear changed Stuart's wrath to contempt, and giving him an impulse that sent him quite out of the door, he returned to sooth Perdita with the assurance that they had nothing to fear from the "cowardly dog." She was confounded with terror, but much more frightened by the vehemence of Stuart's passion than by the threats of the mate. She had always seen her protector move like an unobstructed stream along its course, in calm and silent power. Now he was the torrent, that no human force could control or direct.

She saw before her calamities far worse than any she had endured. She believed that the mate, as soon as he was recovered from his paroxysm of terror, would communicate his discovery. She apprehended the most fatal issue from Frank's threats and determined resolution, and the possibility that his generous zeal for her might involve him in crime, was intolerable to her. Such thoughts do not become less

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terrible by solitary meditation—in the solemnity of night and amidst the howlings of a storm. Every blast spoke reproach and warning to Perdita, and tortured by those harpies remorse and fear, she took a sudden resolution to reveal herself to the captain, feeling at the moment that if she warded off evil from her protector, she could patiently abide the worst consequences to herself. She sprang from her berth as if afraid of being checked by a second thought, and rushed

from the steerage to the cabin. All was perfect stillness there—the passengers had retired to their beds. The captain was sitting by the table, he had been reading, but his book had fallen to the floor, his head had sunk on his breast, and he was in a profound sleep. The light shone full on his weather-beaten face—on large uncouth features—on lines deepened to furrows—and muscles stiffened by time. Never was there an aspect more discouraging to one who needed mercy, and poor Perdita stood trembling before him and close to him, and dared not, could not speak. She heard a footstep approaching, still her tongue was glued to the roof of her mouth. Then she heard her name pronounced in a low whisper at the cabin door, and turning, she saw Stuart there beckoning most earnestly to her. She shook her head, signed to him to withdraw, and laid her hand on the captain's shoulder. There was but one way to thwart her intentions, and Frank's was not a hesi-

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tating spirit, he sprang forward, caught her in his arms, and before the old man had rubbed his eyes fairly open, Perdita was again safe in the steerage.

Stuart's threats produced the intended effect on the mate; he was completely intimidated. He scarcely ventured out of Frank's sight lest he should incur his dangerous suspicions, and the next day the vessel, accelerated by the gale of the preceding evening, arrived at Cowes. The captain and mate immediately landed, and Stuart no longer embarrassed by their presence, was able to take the necessary measures for Perdita. She assured him that if once conveyed to the main land, to Portsmouth or Southampton, she could herself take the coach for London, and there, she said, happiness or misery awaited her, which her noble protector could neither promote or avert.

A wherry was procured. Before Perdita was transferred to it, she took leave of all the sailors, shook hands with each of them, and expressed to them individually, her gratitude and good wishes. Her words conveyed nothing but a sense of obligation, but there was something of condescension in her manner, and much of the grace of high station that contrasted strikingly with the abased, fearful, and shrinking air of the girl who had, till then, only been seen gliding like a spectre along the deck, attended by Stuart, and veiled by the shadows of night. As the wherry parted from the ship, she bowed her head

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and waved her handkerchief to Frank's shipmates, and they returned her salutation with three loud cheers.

Stuart attended her to an inn at Portsmouth, engaged for her a seat in the London coach, and then followed her to a private apartment which he had secured, to bid her farewell.

Perdita, from the moment she had felt her emancipation from a degrading condition, and the joy of setting her foot again on her native land, had manifested perhaps, an undue elation of spirits, an elation so opposite to Frank's feelings, that to him it was a grating discord; but when she saw him for the last time, every other emotion gave place to unfeigned sorrow and inexpressive gratitude.

Stuart laid a purse on the table beside her. "My shipmates" he said, "receive their wages to-morrow, so they have been right glad to make their pockets clear of the little trash that was in them, which may be of service to you, though it is of no use to them."

"Oh Frank!" she exclaimed, "if I should ever have any thing in my gift—if I could but reward you for all you have done for me!"

All the blood in Frank's heart rushed to his face, and he said in a voice almost inarticulate with offended pride, "there are services that money cannot buy, and thank God, there are feelings in a poor man's breast worth more than all the gold in the king's coffers."

"Oh what have I said," exclaimed Perdita, "I
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would rather die—rather return to the depth of misery from which you rescued me—yes, ten times told, than to speak one word that should offend you—you to whom I owe every thing—my life—and more than life. I did not say—I did not think, that money could reward you."

"Do not speak that word again," said Frank, half ashamed of his pride, and half glorying in it. "Reward! I want none but your safety and the blessed memory of having done my duty. Money—ho! I care no more for it, than for the dust I tread upon."

"I know it—I am sure of it," cried Perdita, humbled for the moment by a sense of an elevation of soul in Frank, that exalted him far above any accidents of birth or education. "Frank, you are rich in every thing that is good and noble—and what am I, to talk of reward—poor—poor in every thing but gratitude to you, Frank—I am not poor in that—you must not then despise me, and you will not forget me—and you will keep this ring for my sake."

Frank took the ring, and the lily hand she extended to him—his tears fell fast upon it—he struggled for a moment with his feelings, then dashed away his tears, and half-articulating "God bless you!" he hurried out the apartment. Thus separating himself from the beautiful young creature, for whom he had performed a most difficult service with religious fidelity; and of whose name even, he was forever to remain in ignorance.

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The enterprising talent of Stuart ensured its appropriate reward. In one year from the memorable voyage above related, he commanded a vessel; and on the breaking out of the revolutionary war, he devoted himself to his country's cause, with the fervent zeal with which characterized and consecrated that cause—which made the common interest a matter of feeling—a family affair to each individual.

Stuart commanded an armed merchantman, and disputes with the noted Paul Jones the honour of having first struck down the British flag. However this may be, he was distinguished for his skill and intrepidity—and, above all, (and this distinction endures when the most brilliant achievements have become insignificant,) for his humanity to those whom the fortune of war cast in his power.

While on a cruise off the West Indies, Stuart intercepted an enemy's ship bound to Antigua. His adversary was far superior to him in men and guns, but as it did not comport with Stuart's bold spirit to make any very nice calculations of an enemy's superiority, he prepared without hesitation for action. The contest was a very severe one, and the victory long doubtful; but at last the British captain struck his colours. Though we certainly are disposed to render all honour to the skill of our hero, yet we dare not claim for him the whole merit of his success, but rather solve the mystery of victory at such odds, by quoting the expression of a patriotic English boy,

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who said on a similar occasion—"Ah, but the Americans would not have beaten, if the Lord had not been on their side."

After the fight the English commander requested an interview with captain Stuart; he informed him that the wife and mother of the governor of Antigua were on board his vessel, and

that they were almost distracted with terror; he entreated therefore that they might be received with the humanity which their sex demanded, and the deference always due to high station. Stuart replied, “that as to high station, he held that all God’s creatures, who feared their Creator and did their duty, were on a dead level—and as to the duties of humanity, he trusted no American captain need go further than his own heart, for instructions how to perform them.” The British captain was ignorant of the spirit of the times, and auguring nothing favourable from Stuart’s republican reply, returned with a heavy heart to the ladies to conduct them on board the captor’s ship. The elder lady the mother, was a woman of rank, with all the pride and prejudice of high birth. The Americans she deemed all of that *then* much despised order—the common people; rebels and robbers were the best names she bestowed on them, and in the honesty of her ignorance she sincerely believed that she had fallen into the hands of pirates. The younger lady, though deeply affected by their disastrous situation, endeavoured to calm her mother’s apprehensions, and assured her that

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she had heard there were men of distinguished humanity among the American sailors. The old lady shook her head incredulously. “Oh heaven help us,” she groaned, “what can we expect from such horrid fellows, when they know they have lady Strangford and the right honourable Mrs. Liston in their power—and your beauty, Selina! your beauty child! it is a fatal treasure to fall among thieves with—depend on’t— arrange your veil so that it will hang in thick folds over your face—I will draw my hood close.” The precaution on her part seemed quite superfluous, but the young lady obscured some of heaven’s cunningest workmanship with her impervious veil.

The servants were ordered to deliver the ladies baggage to the American captain, with a request that some necessaries might be reserved. Stuart answered that he interfered with no private property, and that all the baggage of the ladies remained at their disposal.

Lady Strangford was somewhat reassured by this generosity, and attended by her captain and followed by her daughter and servants, she proceeded to Stuart's ship. Stuart advanced to meet them and offered her his hand—she proudly declined it and passed silently on. A gust of wind blew back her hood—"Faith!" exclaimed one of the sailor who observed the scrupulosity with which she replaced it, "the old lady had best show her face, for I'm sure we'll all give a good birth to such an iron-bound coast as that." But as the same breeze blew aside the young lady's

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veil, there was a general murmur of admiration. She had at the moment graciously accepted the tender of Stuart's hand, in the hope of counteracting the impression of her mother's rudeness, and when her veil was removed he had a full view of her face; conscious that many were gazing on her, she blushed deeply, and hastily readjusted it without raising her eyes. Stuart dropped her hand—smothered an exclamation, and retreated a few paces, leaving her to follow her mother alone.

One of his officers observing his emotion, said, "How is this captain? you don't wink at a broadside, and yet you start at one flash from a lady's bright face."

"I got a scratch on my right arm in the engagement," returned Stuart, evading the raillery, "and the lady's touch gave me a pang."

He then retired to his state-room, and wrote the following note, which he directed to be delivered to the young lady. "Captain Stuart's compliments to the ladies under his protection—

he incloses a ring once bestowed upon him in acknowledgment of honourable conduct, as a pledge to them that the hand that has worn such a badge shall never be sullied by a bad deed. Captain Stuart will proceed immediately to Antigua, conveying the ladies with the least possible delay to their destined port." Such a communication to prisoners of war, might naturally excite emotion in a generous bosom, but it did not account for the ex-

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cess of it manifested by the young lady. She became pale and faint, and when her mother, alarmed at such a demonstration of feeling, took up the note, she caught it from her, and then, after a second thought, relinquished it to her.

"I see nothing in this Selina," said the old lady, after perusing and reperusing it, "to throw you into such a flurry, but you are young, and are thinking no doubt of getting home to your husband and children, young people's feelings, are, like soft wax, easily melted."

"There is a warmth in some kindness," rejoined the daughter earnestly, "that ought to melt the hardest substance."

"Really, I do not see any thing so very striking in this man's civility. It would be, of course you know in the British navy; politeness, and all that sort of thing being inborn in an Englishman, but it may be, indeed I fancy it is, quite unheard of in an American."

"Shall I write our acknowledgments, madam, to captain Stuart?" asked the young lady with evident solicitude to drop the conversation.

"Certainly—certainly, my dear Selina, always be ceremoniously polite with your inferiors."

“Madam, I think this noble captain,” she would have added, “has no superiors,” but afraid of further discussion, she concluded her sentence with the tame addition, “richly deserves our thanks.”

She then wrote the following note. “Mrs. Liston,
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in behalf of her mother in law lady Strangford, and on her own part, offers her warmest thanks to captain Stuart—the ladies esteem it heaven’s peculiar mercy that captain Stuart is their captor. They have already had such experience of his magnanimity, as to render them perfectly tranquil in reposing their safety and happiness on his honour.” The ring, without any allusion to it, was reenclosed.

When captain Stuart had perused the note, he inquired if the lady had not requested to speak with him. He was answered that so far from intimating such a wish, she had said to her mother that she should remain in her state-room, till she was summoned to leave captain Stuart’s vessel. The captain looked extremely chagrined, he knit his brows, and bit his lips, and gave his orders hastily, with the usual sea expletives appended to them—“a sure sign,” his men said, “that something went wrong with their captain,” but these signs of repressed emotion were all the expression he allowed to his offended pride, or perhaps his better feelings. The Ladies were scrupulously served, and every deferential attention paid to them that lady Strangford would have anticipated in the best disciplined ship in his majesty’s service.

A few days’ sail brought the schooner to the port of Antigua. She entered the harbour under a flag of truce, and remained there just time enough for the disembarkation of the ladies and their suite. During this ceremony the captain remained in his birth, under

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pretext of a violent head-ache; but it was observed that they were no sooner fairly off than he was on the deck again, moving about with an activity and even impetuosity that seemed quite incompatible with a debilitating malady.

Captain Stuart continued for some months a fortunate cruise about the West India islands. His was not the prudent maxim that “discretion is the better part of valour,” but when valour would have been bootless he knew how to employ the alternative, and his little schooner was celebrated as the most desperate fighter and the swiftest sailor in those seas, and her captain became so formidable, that the English admiral off that station gave orders that the schooner should be followed and destroyed at all hazards.

Soon after this he was pursued by a ship of the line and compelled to take refuge in the harbour of St. Kitts, a French, and of course a friendly port to the American flag. Here he anchored his vessel, and deeming himself perfectly secure, and wearied with hard duty, he retired to his berth after setting a watch, and dismissing his crew to repose. In the middle of the night he was alarmed by an attack from the pursuing frigate, which had contrived to elude the vigilance of the fort that guarded the entrance of the harbour, and was already in such a position in relation to him as to cut off every possibility of escape. His spirit, far from quailing, was exasperated by the surprise. He fought as the most courageous animals

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fight at bay. To increase the horror of his situation, the commander of the fort, from some fatal mistake, opened a fire upon him. He was boarded on all sides by boats manned with eighty-four men. We are too ignorant of such matters, and too peaceably inclined to give any interest to the particulars of a sea-fight. Suffice it to say, that our hero did not surrender till he was himself disabled by wounds, his little band cut down, and his schooner a wreck. When the British

commander ascertained the actual force with which he had contended, his pride was stung with the consciousness that a victory so dearly bought, had all of defeat but the disgraceful name; and, incapable of that sympathy which a magnanimous spirit always feels with a noble captive, he arraigned captain Stuart before him as a criminal, and demanded of him how he dared against the law of nations, to defend an indefensible vessel.

“Did you think,” retorted Stuart with cold contempt, “that I had gunpowder and would not burn it? do you talk to me of the law of the nations! I fight after the law of nature, that teaches me to spend the last kernel of powder and the last drop of blood, in my country’s service.” His conqueror’s temper heated before, was inflamed by Stuart’s reply. He ordered him to be manacled and put into close confinement. This conduct may appear extraordinary in the commander of a British frigate, but the English, in their contest with the colonies were not always

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governed by those generous principles, by which they have themselves so much alleviated the miseries of war. A defeated American was treated as a lawful enemy, or a rebel, as suited the individual temper of the conqueror.

The frigate was so much injured in the fight as to render a refit necessary, and her commander sailed with his prize for Antigua.

Stuart well knew that his fidelity to his country, rendered him obnoxious to the severest judgment from the admiralty court, and though he might plead the services he had rendered the ladies of the governor’s family in mitigation of his sentence, he proudly resolved never to advert to favours, which he had reason to believe had been lightly estimated.

Spirits most magnanimous in prosperity are often most lofty in adversity. Frank Stuart, mutilated by wounds, dejected by the fatal calamities of his faithful crew, irritated by the indignities heaped on him by his unworthy captor, and stung by secret thoughts of some real or fancied injury—chafed and overburdened with many griefs, received, and sullenly obeyed a summons to the presence of the governor. It cannot be denied, that reluctantly as he appeared before the governor, he surveyed him at his introduction with a look of keen curiosity. He was not surprised to see a man rather past his prime, though not yet declined into the vale of years. With generous allow-

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ance for the effect of a tropical climate, he might not have been more than forty-five. His physiognomy was agreeable, and his deportment gentlemanly. He received captain Stuart with far more courtesy than was often vouchsafed from an officer of the crown, to one who fought under the rebel banner, and remarking that he looked pale and sick, he begged him to be seated.

Stuart declined the civility, and continued resting on a crutch, which a severe wound in his leg rendered necessary.

“You are the commander of the schooner Betsy?” said the governor.

“What’s left of him,” returned Stuart.

“You appear to be severely wounded,” continued the governor.

“Hacked to pieces,” rejoined Stuart, in a manner suited to the brevity of his reply.

“Your name, I believe, is Frank Stuart?”

“I have no reason to deny the name, thank God.”

“And, thank God, I have reason to bless and honour it,” exclaimed the governor, advancing and grasping Frank’s hand heartily. “What metal did you deem me of, my noble

friend, that I should forget such favours as you conferred on me, in the persons of my wife and mother.”

“I have known greater favours than those forgotten,” said Frank, and the sudden illumination of his

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pale face, showed how deeply he felt what he uttered.

“Say you so!” exclaimed the governor with good humoured warmth; “well, but that I am too poor to pay my own debts to you, I should count it a pleasure to assume those of all my species—but heaven grant, my friend, that you do not allude to my wife and mother. I blamed them much for not bringing you on shore with them—but my mother is somewhat over punctilious, and my wife, poor soul! her nerves were so shattered by that sea-fight, that she is but now herself again. On my word, so far from wanting gratitude to you, she never hears an allusion to you without tears, the language women deal in when words are too cold for them. But come,” concluded the governor, for he found that all his efforts did but add to Stuart’s evident distress, “come, follow me to the drawing-room, the ladies will themselves convince you, how impatient they have been to welcome you.”

“Are they apprised,” asked Stuart, still hesitating and holding back, “whom they are to see?”

“That are they—my mother is as much delighted as if his majesty were in waiting, and my wife is weeping with joy.”

“Perhaps,” said Stuart, still hesitating, “she would rather not see me now.”

“Nonsense, my good friend, come along. It is not for a brave fellow like you to shrink from a few friendly tears from a woman’s eye.”

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Nothing more could be urged, and Stuart followed governor Liston to the presence of the ladies. Lady Strangford rose and offered him her hand with the most condescending kindness. Mrs. Liston rose too, but did not advance till her husband said, “come Selina, speak your welcome to our benefactor—he may misinterpret this expression of your feelings.”

“Oh no,” she said, now advancing eagerly, and fixing her eye on Stuart, while her cheeks, neck, and brow were suffused with crimson, “Oh no, Captain Stuart knows how deeply I must feel benefits, which none but he that bestowed them could forget or undervalue.”

“It was a rule my mother taught me,” replied Frank with bluntness, softened however by a sudden gleam of pleasure, “that givers should not have better memories than receivers.” There was a meaning in his honest phrase hidden from two of his auditors, but quite intelligible to her for whom it was designed, and to our readers, who have doubtless already anticipated that the honourable Mrs. Liston was none other than the fugitive Perdita. A sudden change of colour showed that she felt acutely Stuart’s keen though veiled reproach.

“A benefit,” she replied, still speaking in a double sense, “such as I have received from you, Captain Stuart, may be too deeply felt to be acknowledged by words—now heaven has given us the opportunity of deeds, and you shall find that my grati-

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tude is only inferior to your merit.” Stuart was more accustomed to embody his feelings in action than speech, and he remained silent. He felt as if he were the sport of a dream, when he looked on the transformed Perdita. He knew not why, but invested as she now was, with all the power of wealth and the elegance of fashion, he felt not half the awe of her, as when in her helplessness

and dependence, “he had fenced her rounde with many a spelle,” wrought by youthful and chivalric feeling.

He perceived, in spite of Mrs. Liston’s efforts, that his presence was embarrassing to her, and he would have taken leave, but the governor insisted peremptorily on his remaining to dine with him. Then saying that he had indispensable business to transact, and must be absent for a half hour, he would, he said, “leave the ladies to the free expression of their feelings.”

When he was gone, Mrs. Liston said to her mother, “I do not think your little favourite, Francis, is quite well to-day—will you have the goodness to look in upon him and give nurse some advice.” The old lady went without reluctance, as most people do to give advice, and Mrs. Liston turned to Stuart, and said, “I gave my boy your name, with a prayer that God would give him your spirit. Do not, oh do not think me,” she continued, her lip quivering with emotion, “the ungrateful wretch I have appeared. I am condemned to silence by the pride of another.

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My heart rebels, but I am bound to keep that a secret, which my feelings prompt me to publish to the world.” Stuart would have spoken, but she anticipated him: “Listen to me without interruption,” she said, “my story is my only apology, and I have but brief space to tell it in. It was love, as you once guessed, that led me to that mad voyage to America. I had a silly passion for a young Virginian, who had been sent to England for his education—he was nineteen, I fifteen, when we promised to meet on board the ship which conveyed me to America. His purpose, but not his concert with me was discovered, and he was detained in England. You know all the events of my enterprise. I left a letter for my father, informing him that I had determined to abandon England, but I gave him not the slightest clue to my real designs. I was an only, and as you will readily believe, a spoiled child. My mother was not living, and my father hoping that

I should soon return, and wishing to veil my folly, gave out that he has sent me to a boarding-school on the continent, and himself retired to Switzerland. When I arrived in London, I obtained his address and followed him. He immediately received me to apparent favour, but never restored me to his confidence. His heart was hardened by my childish folly, and though I recounted to him all my sufferings, I never drew a tear from him; but when I spoke of you, and dwelt on the particulars of your goodness to me, his eye would moisten, and he would exclaim, [43]

‘God bless the lad.’ I must be brief,” she continued, casting her eye apprehensively at the door; “Mr. Liston came with his mother to Geneva, where we resided; he addressed me—my father favoured his suit, and though he is, as you perceive, much older than myself, I consented to marry him, but not, as I told my father, till I had unfolded my history to him. My father was incensed at what he called my folly—he treated me harshly—I was subdued, and our contest ended in my solemnly swearing never to divulge the secret, on the preservation of which he fancied the honour of his proud name to depend.”

“Thank God,” then exclaimed Frank with a burst of honest feeling, “it was not your pride, cursed pride, and I may still think on Perdita as a true, tender-hearted girl, it was a pleasant spot in my memory,” he continued, dashing away a tear, “and I hated to have it crossed with a black line.”

Mrs. Liston improved all that remained of her mother’s absence in detailing some particulars, not necessary to relate, by which it appeared that notwithstanding she had dispensed with the article of love in her marriage, (we crave mercy of our fair young readers,) her husband’s virtue and indulgence had matured a sentiment of affection, if not as romantic, yet quite as safe and

enduring as youthful passion. She assured Stuart that she regarded him as the means of all her happiness. "Not a day passes," she said, raising her beautiful eyes to heaven, "that I do not

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remember my generous deliverer, where alone I am permitted to speak of him." The old lady now rejoined them, bringing her grandchild in her arms. Frank threw down his crutch, forgot his wounds, and permitted his full heart to flow out, in the caresses he lavished on his little namesake.

The governor redeemed Stuart's schooner, and made such representations before the admiralty court of Stuart's merits, and of the ill treatment he had received from the commander of the frigate, that the court ordered the schooner to be refitted and equipped, and permitted to proceed to sea at the pleasure of captain Stuart. He remained for several days domesticated in the governor's family, and treated by every member of it with a frank cordiality suited to his temper and merits. Every look, word and action of Mrs. Liston expressed to him, that his singular service was engraven on her heart. He forbore even to allude to it, and with his characteristic magnanimity never inquired, directly or indirectly, her family name. He observed a timidity and apprehensiveness in her manner that resulted from a consciousness that she had, however reluctantly, practiced a fraud on her husband, and he said "that having felt how burdensome it was to keep a secret from his commander for a short voyage, he thought it was quite too heavy a lading for the voyage of life."

The demonstrations of gratitude which Stuart received from governor Liston and his family, he deem-

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ed out of all proportion to his services, and being more accustomed to bestow than to receive, he became restless, and as soon as his schooner was ready for sea, he announced his departure, and bade his friends farewell. He said that the tears that Perdita, (he always called her Perdita,) shed at parting, were far more precious to him than all the rich gifts she had bestowed on him.

At the moment Stuart set his foot on the deck of his vessel, the American colours, at the governor's command, were hoisted. The generous sympathies of the multitude were moved, and huzzas from a thousand voices rent the air. Governor Liston and his suite and most of the merchant vessels, then in port, escorted the schooner out of the harbour. Even the stern usages of war cannot extinguish that sentiment in the bosom of man, implanted by God, which leads him to do homage to a brave and generous foe.

Captain Stuart continued to the end of the war, to serve his country with unabated zeal, and, when peace was restored, the same hardy spirit that had distinguished him in perilous times, made him foremost in bold adventure.

He commanded the second American trading vessel that arrived at Canton after the peace; and this vessel with which he sailed over half the globe, was a sloop of eighty tons, little more than half the size of the largest now used for the river trade. This adventure will be highly estimated by those who have

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been so fortunate as to read the merry tale of Dolph Heilegher, and who remember the prudence manifested, at that period, by the wary Dutchmen in navigating these small vessels: how they were fain to shelter themselves at night in the friendly harbours with which the river abounds, and, we believe, to avoid adventuring through Haverstraw bay or the Tappan sea, in a high wind.

When Stuart's little sloop rode into the port of Canton, it was mistaken for a tender from a large ship, and the bold mariner was afterwards familiarly called by the great Hong merchants, "the one-mast captain."

Fifty-seven years have gone by since the Hazard sailed from Oxford, and our hero is now enjoying in the winter of his life, the fruits of a summer of activity and integrity. Time, which he has well used, has used him gently—his hair is a little thinned and mottled, but is still a sufficient shelter to his honoured head. His eye when he talks of the past, (all good old men love to talk of the past,) rekindles with the fire of youth, his healthful complexion speaks his temperance, and a double row of unimpaired ivory, justifies the pleasant vanity of his boast, that he can still show his teeth to an enemy.

Professional carelessness or generosity has left him little of the world's 'gear,' but he is rich—for he is independent of riches. He says he would recom-

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mend honest dealings and an open hand, to all who would lay up stores of pleasant thoughts for their old age; and he avers—and who will gainsay him, that in the silent watches of the night, the memory of money well bestowed is better than a pocket full of guineas. He loves to recount his boyish pranks, and recal his childish feelings—how he rattled down the chincapins on the devoted heads of a troop of little girls; and how he was whipped for crying to go with Braddock and be a soldier! but above all, he loves to dwell on some of the particulars we have related, and in the sincerity of religious feeling to ascribe praise to that being, who kept his youth within the narrow bound of strict virtue.

I saw him last week surrounded by his grandchildren, recounting his imminent dangers and hair bread 'scapes to a favourite boy, while the nimble fingers of rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed little girls were employed in making sails for a miniature ship, which the old man has just completed. Long may he enjoy the talisman that recals to his imagination, labour without its hardship, and enterprise without its failure—and God grant gentle breezes and a clear sky to the close of his voyage of life!