



MILES
WALLINGFORD

JAMES FENIMORE
COOPER

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SEQUEL TO "AFLOAT AND ASHORE"

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JAMES FENIMORE COOPER



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Preface

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The conclusion of this tale requires but little preface. Many persons may think that there is too much of an old man's despondency in a few of the opinions of this portion of the work; but, after sixty, it is seldom we view the things of this world *en beau*. There are certain political allusions, very few in number, but pretty strong in language, that the signs of the times fully justify, in the editor's judgment; though he does not profess to give his own sentiments in this work, so much as those of the subject of the narrative himself. "The anti-rent combination," for instance, will prove, according to the editor's conjectures, to be one of two things in this community—the commencement of a dire revolution, or the commencement of a return to the sounder notions and juster principles that prevailed among us thirty years since, than certainly prevail to-day. There is one favourable symptom discoverable in the deep-seated disease that pervades the social system: men dare, and do, deal more honestly and frankly with the condition of society in this country, than was done a few years since. This right, one that ought to be most dear to every freeman, has been recovered only by painful sacrifices and a stern resolution; but recovered it has been, in some measure; and, were the pens of the country true to their owners' privileges, we should soon come to a just view of the sacred nature of private character, as well as the target-like vulnerability of public follies and public vice. It is certain that, for a series of dangerous years, notions just the reverse of this have prevailed among us, gradually rendering the American press equally the vehicle of the most atrocious personal calumny, and the most flatulent national self-adulation. It is under

such a state of things that the few evils alluded to in this work have had their rise. Bodies of men, however ignorant or small, have come to consider themselves as integral portions of a community that never errs, and, consequently, entitled to esteem themselves infallible. When in debt, they have fancied it political liberty to pay their debts by the strong hand; a very easy transition for those who believe themselves able to effect all their objects. The disease has already passed out of New York into Pennsylvania; it will spread, like any other epidemic, throughout the country; and there will soon be a severe struggle among us, between the knave and the honest man. Let the class of the latter look to it. It is to be hoped it is still sufficiently powerful to conquer.

These few remarks are made in explanation of certain opinions of Mr. Wallingford, that have been extorted from him by the events of the day, as he was preparing this work for the press; remarks that might seem out of place, were it not a part of his original plan, which contemplated enlarging far more than he has, indeed, on some of the prominent peculiarities of the state of society in which he has passed the greater part of his days.

Chapter I

*

—"But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove;
Mend when thou canst—"

Lear.

It is almost as impossible to describe minutely what occurred on the boat's reaching the Wallingford, as to describe all the terrific incidents of the struggle between Drewett and myself in the water. I had sufficient perception, however, to see, as I was assisted on board by Mr. Hardinge and Neb, that Lucy was not on deck. She had probably gone to join Grace, with a view to be in readiness for meeting the dire intelligence that was expected. I afterwards learned that she was long on her knees in the after-cabin, engaged in that convulsive prayer which is apt to accompany sudden and extreme distress in those who appeal to God in their agony.

During the brief moments, and they were but mere particles of time, if one can use such an expression, in which my senses could catch anything beyond the horrid scene in which I was so closely engaged, I had heard shrill screams from the lungs of Chloe; but Lucy's voice had not mingled in the outcry. Even now, as we were raised, or aided, to the deck, the former stood, with her face glistening with tears, half convulsed with terror and half expanding with delight, uncertain whether to laugh or to weep, looking first at

her master and then at her own admirer, until her feelings found a vent in the old exclamation of "der feller!"

It was fortunate for Andrew Drewett that a man of Post's experience and steadiness was with us. No sooner was the seemingly lifeless body on board, than Mr. Hardinge ordered the water-cask to be got out; and he and Marble would have soon been rolling the poor fellow with all their might, or holding him up by the heels, under the notion that the water he had swallowed must be got out of him, before he could again breathe; but the authority of one so high in the profession soon put a stop to this. Drewett's wet clothes were immediately removed, blankets were warmed at the galley, and the most judicious means were resorted to, in order to restore the circulation. The physician soon detected signs of life, and, ordering all but one or two assistants to leave the spot, in ten minutes Drewett was placed in a warm bed, and might be considered out of danger.

The terrific scene enacted so directly before his eyes, produced an effect on the *Albon*-ny man, who consented to haul aft his main-sheet, lower his studding-sail and top-sail, come by the wind, stand across to the Wallingford, heave-to, and lower a boat. This occurred just as Drewett was taken below; and, a minute later, old Mrs. Drewett and her two daughters, Helen and Caroline, were brought alongside of us. The fears of these tender relatives were allayed by my report; for, by this time, I could both talk and walk; and Post raised no objection to their being permitted to go below. I seized that opportunity to jump down into the sloop's hold, where Neb brought me some dry clothes; and I was soon in a warm, delightful glow, that contributed in no small degree to my comfort. So desperate had been my struggles, however, that it took a good night's rest completely to restore the tone of my nerves and all my strength. My arrangements were barely completed, when I was summoned to the cabin.

Grace met me with extended arms. She wept on my bosom for many minutes. She was dreadfully agitated as it was; though happily she knew nothing of the cause of Chloe's screams, and of the confusion on deck, until I was known to be safe. Then Lucy communicated all the facts to her in as considerate a manner as her own kind and gentle nature could dictate. I was sent for, as just stated, and caressed like any other precious thing that its owner had supposed itself about to lose. We were still in an agitated state, when Mr. Hardinge appeared at the door of the cabin, with a prayer-book in his hand. He demanded our attention, all kneeling in both cabins, while the good, simple-minded old man read some of the collects, the Lord's Prayer, and concluded with the thanksgiving for "a safe return from sea"! He would have given us the marriage ceremony itself, before he would have gone out of the prayer-book for any united worship whatever.

It was impossible not to smile at this last act of pious simplicity, while it was equally impossible not to be touched with such an evidence of sincere devotion. The offering had a soothing influence on all our feelings, and most especially on those of the excited females. As I came out into the main-cabin, after this act of devotion, the excellent divine took me in his arms, kissed me just as he had been used to do when a boy, and blessed me aloud. I confess I was obliged to rush on deck to conceal my emotion.

In a few minutes I became sufficiently composed to order sail made on our course, when we followed the Orpheus up the river, soon passing her, and taking care to give her a wide berth; a precaution I long regretted not having used at first. As Mrs. Drewett and her two daughters refused to quit Andrew, we had the whole family added to our party, as it might be, per force. I confess to having been sufficiently selfish to complain a little, to myself only, however, at always finding these people in my way, during the brief intervals I now enjoyed of being near Lucy. As

there was no help after seeing all the canvass spread, I took a seat in one of the chairs that stood on the main-deck, and began, for the first time, coolly to ponder on all that had just passed. While thus occupied, Marble drew a chair to my side, gave me a cordial squeeze of the hand, and began to converse. At this moment, neatly tricked out in dry clothes, stood Neb on the forecastle, with his arms folded, sailor-fashion, as calm as if he had never felt the wind blow; occasionally giving in, however, under the influence of Chloe's smiles and unsophisticated admiration. In these moments of weakness the black would bow his head, give vent to a short laugh when, suddenly recovering himself, he would endeavour to appear dignified. While this pantomime was in the course of exhibition forward, the discourse aft did not flag.

"Providence intends you for something remarkable, Miles," my mate continued, after one or two brief expressions of his satisfaction at my safety; "something uncommonly remarkable, depend on it. First, you were spared in the boat off the Isle of Bourbon; then, in another boat off Delaware Bay; next, you got rid of the Frenchman so dexterously in the British Channel; after that, there was the turn-up with the bloody Smudge and his companions; next comes the recapture of the Crisis; sixthly, as one might say, you picked me up at sea, a runaway hermit; and now here, this very day, seventhly and lastly, are you sitting safe and sound, after carrying as regular a lubber as ever fell overboard, on your head and shoulders, down to the bottom of the Hudson, no less than three times! I consider you to be the only man living who ever sank his three times, and came up to tell of it, with his own tongue."

"I am not at all conscious of having said one word about it, Moses," I retorted, a little drily.

"Every motion, every glance of your eye, boy, tells the story. No; Providence intends you for something remarkable, you may rely on *that*. One of these days you may go to Congress—who knows?"

"By the same rule, you are to be included, then; for in most of my adventures you have been a sharer, besides having quantities that are exclusively your own. Remember, you have even been a hermit."

"Hu-s-h—not a syllable about it, or the children would run after me as a sight. You must have generalized in a remarkable way, Miles, after you sunk the last time, without much hope of coming up again?"

"Indeed, my friend, you are quite right in your conjecture. So near a view of death is apt to make us all take rapid and wide views of the past. I believe it even crossed my mind that *you* would miss me sadly."

"Ay," returned Marble, with feeling; "them are the moments to bring out the truth! Not a juster idee passed your brain than *that*, Master Miles, I can assure you. Missed you! I would have bought a boat and started for Marble Land, never again to quit it, the day after the funeral. But there stands your cook, fidgeting and looking this way, as if she had a word to put in on the occasion. This expl'ite of Neb's will set the niggers up in the world; and it wouldn't surprise me if it cost you a suit of finery all round."

"A price I will cheerfully pay for my life. It is as you say—Dido certainly wishes to speak to me, and I must give her an invitation to come nearer."

Dido Clawbonny was the cook of the family, and the mother of Chloe. Whatever hypercriticism might object to her colour, which

was a black out of which all the gloss had fairly glistened itself over the fire, no one could deny her being full blown. Her weight was exactly two hundred, and her countenance a strange medley of the light-heartedness of her race, and the habitual and necessary severity of a cook. She often protested that she was weighed down by "responserbility;" the whole of the discredit of overdone beef, or under-done fish, together with those which attach themselves to heavy bread, lead-like buckwheat-cakes, and a hundred other similar cases, belonging exclusively to her office. She had been twice married, the last connection having been formed only a twelvemonth before. In obedience to a sign, this important lady now approached.

"Welcome back, Masser Mile," Dido began with a curtsy, meaning "Welcome back from being half-drowned;" "ebberybody *so* grad you isn't hurt!"

"Thank you, Dido—thank you with all my heart. If I have gained nothing else by the ducking, I have gained a knowledge of the manner in which my servants love me."

"Lor' bless us all! How we help it, Masser Mile? As if a body can posserbly help how lub come and go! Lub jest like religion, Masser Mile—some get him, and some don't. But lub for a young masser and a young missus, sah—*dat* jest as nat'ral, as lub for ole masser and ole missus. I t'ink nut'in' of neider."

Luckily, I was too well acquainted with the Clawbonny dialect to need a vocabulary in order to understand the meaning of Dido. All she wished to express was the idea that it was so much a matter of course for the dependants of the family to love its heads, that she did not think the mere circumstance, in itself, worthy of a second thought.

"Well, Dido," I said, "how does matrimony agree with you, in your old age? I hear you took a second partner to yourself, while I was last at sea."

Dido let her eyes fall on the deck, according to the custom of all brides, let their colour be what it may; manifested a proper degree of confusion, then curtsied, turned her full moon-face so as to resemble a half-moon, and answered, with a very suspicious sort of a sigh—

"Yes, Masser Mile, dat jest so. I did t'ink to wait and ask 'e young masser's consent; but Cupid say"—not the god of love, but an old negro of that name, Dido's second partner—"but Cupid say, 'what odd he make to Masser Mile; he long way off, and he won't care:' and so, sah, rader than be tormented so by Cupid, one had altogedder better be married at once—dat all, sah."

"And that is quite enough, my good woman; that everything may be in rule, I give my consent now, and most cheerfully."

"T'ankee, sah!" dropping a curtsey, and showing her teeth.

"Of course the ceremony was performed by our excellent rector, good Mr. Hardinge?"

"Sartain, sah—no Clawbonny nigger t'ink he marry at all, 'less Masser Hardinge bless him and say Amen. Ebberybody say 'e marriage is as good as ole Masser and Missusses. Dis make two time Dido got married; and both time good, lawful ceremunny, as ebber was. Oh! yes, sah!"

"And I hope your change of condition has proved to your mind, Dido, now the thing is done. Old Cupid is no great matter in the way of beauty, certainly; but he is an honest, sober fellow enough."

"Yes, sah, he *dat*, no one *can* deny. Ah! Masser Mile, em 'ere step-husband, after all, nebber jest like a body own husband! Cupid *berry* honest, and *berry* sober; but he only step-husband; and *dat* I tell him twenty time already, I do t'ink, if trut' was said."

"Perhaps you have now said it often enough—twenty times are quite sufficient to tell a man such a fact."

"Yes, sah," dropping another curtsey, "if Masser Mile please."

"I do please, and think you have told him *that* often enough. If a man won't learn a thing in twenty lessons, he is not worth the trouble of teaching. So tell him he's a step-husband no more, but try something else. I hope he makes Chloe a good father?"

"Lor', sah, he no Chloe's fadder, at all—*her* fadder dead and gone, and nebber come back. I want to say a word to young Masser, 'bout Chloe and dat 'ere fellow, Neb—yes, sah."

"Well, what is it, Dido? I see they like each other, and suppose *they* wish to get married, too. Is that the object of your visit? if so, I consent without waiting to be asked. Neb will make no step-husband, I can promise you."

"Don't be in a hurry, Masser Mile," said Dido, with an eagerness that showed this ready consent was anything but what she wanted. "Dere many 'jection to Neb, when he ask to marry a young gal in Chloe sitation. You know, sah, Chloe now Miss Grace's own waitin'-maid. Nobody else help her dress, or do anything in 'e young missus's room, dan Chloe, sheself—my darter, Chloe Clawbonny!"

Here was a new turn given to the affair! It was "like master, like man." Neb's love (or *lub*, for that was just the word, and just the

idea, too) was no more fated to run smooth than my own; and the same objection lay against us both, viz., want of gentility! I determined to say a good word for the poor fellow, however; while it would have been exceeding the usage of the family to interfere in any other manner than by advice, in an affair of the heart.

"If Chloe is my sister's favourite servant, Dido," I remarked, "you are to remember that Neb is mine."

"Dat true, sah, and so Chloe say; but dere great difference, Masser Mile, atween Clawbonny and a ship. Neb own, himself, young Masser, he doesn't even lib in cabin, where you lib, sah."

"All that is true, Dido; but there is a difference of another sort between a ship and a house. The house-servant may be more liked and trusted than the out-door servant; but we think, at sea, it is more honourable to be a foremast-hand than to be in the cabin, unless as an officer. I was a foremast Jack some time, myself; and Neb is only in such a berth as his master once filled."

"Dat a great deal—quite won'erful, sah—berry great deal, and more dan Chloe can say, or I can wish her to say. But, sah, dey say now Neb has save 'e young masser's life, young masser must gib him free-paper; and no gal of mine shall ebber be free nigger's wife. No, sah; 'scuse me from dat disgrace, which too much for faih'ful ole servant to bear!"

"I am afraid, Dido, Neb is the same way of thinking. I offered him his freedom, the other day, and he refused to receive it. Times are changing in this country; and it will be thought, soon, it is more creditable for a black to be free, than to be any man's slave. The law means to free all hands of you, one of these days."

"Nebber tell me dat, Masser Mile—dat day nebber come for me or mine; even ole Cupid know better dan *dat*. Now, sah, Misser Van Blarcum's Brom want to have Chloe, dreadful; but I nebber consent to sich a uner"—(Dido meant union)—"nebber. Our family, sah, altogedder too good to marry in among the Van Blarcums. Nebber has been, and never shall be uner atween 'em."

"I was not aware, Dido, that the Clawbonny slaves were so particular about their connections."

"Won'erful particular, sah, and ebber hab been, and ebber will be. Don't t'ink, Masser Mile, I marry ole Cupid, myself, if anoder prop'r connection offer in 'e family; but I prefer him, to marry into any oder family hereabout."

"Neb is Clawbonny, and my great friend; so I hope you will think better of his suit. Some day Chloe may like to be free; and Neb will always have it in his power to make his wife free, as well as himself."

"Sah, I t'ink, as you say, Masser Miles, sah—when I hab done t'inkin', sah, hope young masser and young missus hear what ole cook got to say, afore 'ey gives consent."

"Certainly; Chloe is your daughter, and she shall pay you all due respect—for that, I will answer for my sister as well as for myself. We will never encourage disrespect for parents."

Dido renewed and redoubled her thanks, made another profound curtsy, and withdrew with a dignity that, I dare say, in Neb's and Chloe's eyes, boded little good. As for myself, I now mused on the character of the things of this world. Here were people of the very humblest class known in a nation—nay, of a class sealed by nature itself, and doomed to inferiority—just as tenacious of the very

distinctions that were making me so miserable, and against which certain persons, who are wiser than the rest of the world, declaim without understanding them, and even go so far, sometimes, as to deny their existence. My cook reasoned, in her sphere, much as I knew that Rupert reasoned, as the Drewetts reasoned, as the world reasoned, and, as I feared, even Lucy reasoned in my own case! The return of Marble, who had left my side as soon as Dido opened her budget, prevented my dwelling long on this strange—I had almost said, uncouth—coincidence, and brought my mind back to present things.

"As the old woman has spun her yarn, Miles," the mate resumed, "we will go on with matters and things. I have been talking with the mother of the youngster that fell overboard, and giving her some advice for the benefit of her son in time to come; and what do you think she gives as the reason for the silly thing he did?"

"It is quite out of my power to say—that he was a silly fellow naturally, perhaps."

"Love. It seems the poor boy is in love with this sweet friend of yours, Rupert's sister; and it was nothing more nor less than love which made him undertake to play rope-dancer on our main-boom!"

"Did Mrs. Drewett tell you this, with her own mouth, Marble?"

"That did she, Captain Wallingford; for, while you were discussing Neb and Chloe with old Dido, we, that is, the doctor, the mother and myself, were discussing Andrew and Lucy between ourselves. The good old lady gave me to understand it was a settled thing, and that she looked on Miss Hardinge, already, as a third daughter."

This was a strange subject for Mrs. Drewett to discuss with a man like Marble, or even with Post; but some allowances were to be made for Marble's manner of viewing his own connection with the dialogue, and more for the excited condition of the mother's feelings. She was scarcely yet in possession of all her faculties, and might very well commit an indiscretion of this nature, more especially in her conversation with a man in Post's position, overlooking or disregarding the presence of the mate. The effect of all that had passed was to leave a strong impression on my mind that I was too late. Lucy must be engaged, and waited only to become of age, in order to make the settlements she intended in favour of her brother, ere she was married. Her manner to myself was merely the result of habit and sincere friendship; a little increased in interest and gentleness, perhaps, on account of the grievous wrong she felt we had received from Rupert. What right had I to complain, admitting all this to be true? I had scarcely been aware of my own passion for the dear girl for years, and had certainly never attempted to make her acquainted with it. She had made me no pledges, plighted no faith, received no assurances of attachment, was under no obligation to wait my pleasure. So sincere was my affection for Lucy, that I rejoiced, even in my misery, when I remembered that not the slightest imputation could be laid on her deportment, truth, or frankness. On the whole, it was perhaps the more natural that she should love Andrew Drewett, one she met for the first time after she became of an age to submit to such impressions, than to love me, whom she had been educated to treat with the familiarity and confidence of a brother. Yes; I was even just enough to admit this.

The scene of the morning, and the presence of Mrs. Drewett and her daughters, produced an entire change in the spirits and intercourse of our party. The ladies remained below most of the time; and as for Drewett himself, he was advised by Post not to quit his berth until he found his strength restored. Mr. Hardinge passed

much time by Andrew Drewett's side, offering such attentions as might be proper from a father to a son. At least it so seemed to me. This left Marble and myself in possession of the quarter-deck, though we had occasional visits from all below—Grace, Lucy, and old Mrs. Drewett, excepted.

In the mean time, the Wallingford continued to ascend the river, favoured until evening by a light southerly breeze. She outsailed everything; and, just as the sun was sinking behind the fine termination of the Catskill range of mountains, we were some miles above the outlet of the stream that has lent it its name.

A lovelier landscape can scarce be imagined than that which presented itself from the deck of the sloop. It was the first time I had ascended the river, or indeed that any of the Clawbonny party had been up it so high, Mr. Hardinge excepted; and everybody was called on deck to look at the beauties of the hour. The sloop was about a mile above Hudson, and the view was to be gazed at towards the south. This is perhaps the finest reach of this very beautiful stream, though it is not the fashion to think so; the Highlands being the part usually preferred. It is easy enough for me, who have since lived among the sublimity of the Swiss and Italian lakes, to understand that there is nothing of a very sublime character, relatively considered, in any of the reaches of the Hudson; but it would be difficult to find a river that has so much which is exquisitely beautiful; and this, too, of a beauty which borders on the grand. Lucy was the first person to create any doubts in my mind concerning the perfection of the Highlands. Just as the cockney declaims about Richmond Hill—the *inland* view from Mont-Martre, of a clouded day, is worth twenty of it—but just as the provincial London cockney declaims about Richmond Hill, so has the provincial American been in the habit of singing the praises of the Highlands of the Hudson. The last are sufficiently striking, I will allow; but they are surpassed in their own kind by a

hundred known mountain landscapes; while the softer parts of the river have scarcely a rival. Lucy, I repeat, was the first person to teach me this distinction—Lucy, who then had never seen either Alps or Apennines. But her eye was as true as her principles, her tongue, or her character. All was truth about this dear girl—truth unadulterated and unalloyed.

"Certainly, my dear Mrs. Drewett," the dear girl said, as she stood supporting the old lady, who leaned on her arm, gazing at the glorious sunset, "the Highlands have nothing to equal this! To me this seems all that art could achieve; while I confess the views in the mountains have ever appeared to want something that the mind can imagine."

Mrs. Drewett, though a respectable, was a common-place woman. She belonged to the vast class that do most of their thinking by proxy; and it was a sort of heresy in her eyes to fancy anything could surpass the Highlands. Poor Mrs. Drewett! She was exceedingly cockney, without having the slightest suspicion of it. *Her* best ought to be everybody else's best. She combated Lucy's notion warmly, therefore, protesting that the Highlands *could* not have a superior. This is a sort of argument it is not easy to overcome; and her companion was content to admire the scene before her, in silence, after urging one or two reasons, in support of her opinion, in her own quiet, unpretending manner.

I overheard this little argument, and was a close observer of the manner of the parlies. Mrs. Drewett was extremely indulgent, even while warmest, seeming to me to resist Lucy's opinion as an affectionate mother would contend with the mistaken notions of a very favourite child. On the other hand, Lucy appeared confiding, and spoke as the young of her sex are most apt to do, when they utter their thoughts to ears they feel must be indulgent.

A sunset cannot last for ever; and even this, sweet as it had been, soon became tame and tasteless to me. As the ladies now disappeared, I determined to anchor, the wind failing, and the tide coming ahead. Marble and myself had a sort of state-room fitted up for us in the hold; and thither I was glad to retire, standing really in need of rest, after the terrible exertions of that day. What passed in the cabins that evening, I had no opportunity of knowing, though I heard laughing, and happy female voices, through the bulkheads, hours after my own head was on its pillow. When Marble came down to turn in, he told me the cabin party had revived, and that there had been much pleasant discourse among the young people; and this in a way to cause even him to derive great satisfaction as a listener.

Neb gave us a call at daylight. The wind was fresh at west-north-west, but the tide was just beginning to run on the flood. I was so impatient to be rid of my guests, that all hands were called immediately, and we got the sloop under-way. The pilot professed himself willing to beat up through the narrow passages above, and, the Wallingford's greatest performance being on the wind, I was determined to achieve my deliverance that very tide. The sloop drew more water than was usual for the up-river craft, it is true, but she was light, and, just at the moment, could go wherever the loaded Albany vessels went. Those were not the days of vast public works; and as for sea-going craft, none had ever crossed the Overslaugh, so far as had come to my knowledge. Times have changed greatly, since; but the reader will remember I am writing of that remote period in American history, the year of our Lord 1803.

The anchor was no sooner aweigh, than the deck became a scene of activity. The breeze was stiff, and it enabled me to show the Wallingford off to advantage among the dull, flat-bottomed craft of that day. There were reaches in which the wind favoured us,

too; and, by the time the ladies reappeared, we were up among the islands, worming our way through the narrow channels with rapidity and skill. To me, and to Marble also, the scene was entirely novel; and between the activity that our evolutions required, and the constant change of scene, we had little leisure to attend to those in the cabin. Just as breakfast was announced, indeed, the vessel was approaching the more difficult part of the river; and all we got of that meal, we took on deck, at snatches, between the many tacks we made. As good-luck would have it, however, the wind backed more to the westward about eight o'clock; and we were enabled to stem the ebb that began to make at the same time. This gave us the hope of reaching the end of our passage without again anchoring.

At length we reached the Overslaugh, which, as was apt to be the case, was well sprinkled with vessels aground. The pilot carried us through them all, however; if not literally with flying colours, which would have been regarded as an insult by the less fortunate, at least with complete success. Then Albany came into view, leaning against its sharp acclivity, and spreading over its extensive bottom-land. It was not the town it is to-day, by quite three-fourths less in dwellings and people; but it was then, as now, one of the most picturesque-looking places in America. There is no better proof, in its way, how much more influence the talking and writing part of mankind have than the mere actors, than is to be found in the relative consideration of Albany, on the scale of appearance and position, as compared with those enjoyed by a hundred other towns, more especially in the Eastern States. Almost without a competitor, as to beauty of situation, or at least on a level with Richmond and Burlington, among the inland towns, it was usually esteemed a Dutch place that every pretender was at liberty to deride, in my younger days. We are a people by no means addicted to placing our candle under the bushel and yet I cannot recall a single civil expression in any native writer touching the beauties of Albany. It may have been owing to the circumstance that so much

of the town was under the hill at the beginning of the century, and that strangers had few opportunities of seeing it to advantage; but I rather think its want of the Anglo-Saxon origin was the principal reason it was so little in favour.

Glad enough was I to reach the wharves, with their line of storehouses, that then literally spouted wheat into the sloops that crowded the quays, on its way to feed the contending armies of Europe. Late as it was in the season, wheat was still pouring outward through all the channels of the country, enriching the farmers with prices that frequently rose as high as two dollars and a half the bushel, and sometimes as high as three. Yet no one was so poor in America as to want bread! The dearer the grain, the higher the wages of the labourer, and the better he lived.

It was not at all late when the Wallingford was slowly approaching the wharf where it was intended to bring-up. There was a sloop ahead of us, which we had been gradually approaching for the last two hours, but which was enabled to keep in advance in consequence of the lightness of the wind. This dying away of the breeze rendered the approaching noon-tide calm and pleasant; and everybody in-board, even to Grace, came on deck, as we moved slowly past the dwellings on the eastern bank, in order to get a view of the town. I proposed that the Clawbonny party should land, contrary to our original intention, and profit by the opportunity to see the political capital of the State at our leisure. Both Grace and Lucy were inclined to listen favourably; and the Drewetts, Andrew and his sisters, were delighted at this prospect of our remaining together a little longer. Just at this moment, the Wallingford, true to her character, was coming up with the sloop ahead, and was already doubling on her quarter. I was giving some orders, when Lucy and Chloe, supporting Grace, passed me on their way to the cabin. My poor sister was pale as death, and I could see that she trembled so much she could hardly walk. A significant glance from

Lucy bade me not to interfere, and I hid sufficient self-command to obey. I turned to look at the neighbouring sloop, and found at once an explanation of my sister's agitation. The Mertons and Rupert were on her quarter-deck, and so near as to render it impossible to avoid speaking, at least to the former. At this embarrassing instant Lucy returned to my side, with a view, as I afterwards learned, to urge me to carry the Wallingford to some place so distant, as to remove the danger of any intercourse. This accident rendered the precaution useless, the whole party in the other vessel catching sight of my companion at the same moment.

"This is an agreeable surprise!" called out Emily, in whose eyes Rupert's sister could not be an object of indifference. "By your brother's and Mrs. Drewett's account, we had supposed you at Clawbonny, by the bed-side of Miss Wallingford."

"Miss Wallingford is here, as are my father, and Mrs. Drewett, and—"

Lucy never let it be known who that other "and" was intended to include.

"Well, this is altogether surprising!" put in Rupert, with a steadiness of voice that really astounded me. "At the very moment we were giving you lots of credit for your constancy in friendship, and all that sort of thing, here you are, Mademoiselle Lucie, trotting off to the Springs, like all the rest of us, bent on pleasure."

"No, Rupert," answered Lucy, in a tone which I thought could not fail to bring the heartless coxcomb to some sense of the feeling he ought to manifest; "I am going to no Springs. Dr. Post has advised a change of scene and air for Grace; and Miles has brought us all up in his sloop, that we may endeavour to contribute to the

dear sufferer's comfort, in one united family. We shall not land in Albany."

I took my cue from these last words, and understood that I was not even to bring the sloop alongside the wharf.

"Upon my word, it is just as she says, Colonel!" cried Rupert. "I can see my father on the forecastle, with Post, and divers others of my acquaintance. Ay—and there's Drewett, as I live! Wallingford, too! How fare you, noble captain, up in this fresh-water stream? You must be strangely out of your latitude."

"How do you do, Mr. Hardinge?" I coldly returned the salutation; and then I was obliged to speak to the Major and his daughter. But Neb was at the helm, and I had given him a sign to sheer further from our companion. This soon reduced the intercourse to a few wavings of handkerchiefs, and kissings of the hand, in which all the Drewetts came in for a share. As for Lucy, she walked aside, and I seized the occasion to get a word in private.

"What am I to do with the sloop?" I asked. "It will soon be necessary to come to some decision."

"By no means go to the wharf. Oh! this has been most cruel. The cabin-windows are open, and Grace *must* have heard every syllable. Not even a question as to her health! I dread to go below and witness the effect."

I wished not to speak of Rupert to his sister, and avoided the subject. The question, therefore, was simply repeated. Lucy inquired if it were not possible to land our passengers without bringing-up, and, hearing the truth on the subject, she renewed her entreaties not to land. Room was taken accordingly, and the sloop, as soon as high enough, was rounded-to, and the boat lowered. The

portmanteau of Post was placed in it, and the Drewetts were told that everything was ready to put them ashore.

"Surely we are not to part thus!" exclaimed the old lady. "You intend to land, Lucy, if not to accompany us to Ballston? The waters might prove of service to Miss Wallingford."

"Dr. Post thinks not, but advises us to return tranquilly down the river. We may yet go as far as Sandy Hook, or even into the Sound. It all depends on dear Grace's strength and inclinations."

Protestations of regret and disappointment followed, for everybody appeared to think much of Lucy, and very little of my poor sister. Some attempts were even made at persuasion; but the quiet firmness of Lucy soon convinced her friends that she was not to be diverted from her purpose. Mr. Hardinge, too, had a word to say in confirmation of his daughter's decision; and the travellers reluctantly prepared to enter the boat. After he had assisted his mother over the sloop's side, Andrew Drewett turned to me, and in fair, gentleman-like, manly language, expressed his sense of the service I had rendered him. After this acknowledgment, the first he had made, I could do no less than shake his hand; and we parted in the manner of those who have conferred and received a favour.

I could perceive that Lucy's colour heightened, and that she looked exceedingly gratified, while this little scene was in the course of being acted, though I was unable to comprehend the precise feeling that was predominant in her honest and truthful heart. Did that increased colour proceed from pleasure at the handsome manner in which Drewett acquitted himself of one of the most embarrassing of all our duties—the admission of a deep obligation? or was it in any manner connected with her interest in me? I could not ask, and of course did not learn. This scene, however, terminated our

intercourse with the Drewetts, for the moment; the boat pulling away immediately after.

Chapter II

*

"—Misplaced in life,
I know not what I could have been, but feel
I am not what I should be—let it end."

Sardanapalus.

Glad enough was I to find the quiet and domestic character of my vessel restored. Lucy had vanished as soon as it was proper; but, agreeably to her request, I got the sloop's head down-stream, and began our return-passage, without even thinking of putting a foot on the then unknown land of Albany. Marble was too much accustomed to submit without inquiry to the movements of the vessel he was in, to raise any objections; and the Wallingford, her boat in tow, was soon turning down with the tide, aided by a light westerly wind, on her homeward course. This change kept all on deck so busy, that it was some little time ere I saw Lucy again. When we did meet, however, I found her sad, and full of apprehension. Grace had evidently been deeply hurt by Rupert's deportment. The effect on her frame was such, that it was desirable to let her be as little disturbed as possible. Lucy hoped she might fall asleep; for, like an infant, her exhausted physical powers sought relief in this resource, almost as often as the state of her mind would permit. Her existence, although I did not then know it, was like that of the flame which flickers in the air, and which is endangered by the slightest increase of the current to which the lamp may be exposed.

We succeeded in getting across the Overslaugh without touching, and had got down among the islands below Coejiman's,[1] when we were met by the new flood. The wind dying away to a calm, we were compelled to select a berth, and anchor. As soon as we were snug, I sought an interview with Lucy; but the dear girl sent me word by Chloe that Grace was dozing, and that she could not see me just at that moment, as her presence in the cabin was necessary in order to maintain silence. On receiving this message, I ordered the boat hauled up alongside; Marble, myself and Neb got in; when the black sculled us ashore—Chloe grinning at the latter's dexterity, as with one hand, and a mere play of the wrist, he caused the water to foam under the bows of our little bark.

The spot where we landed was a small but lovely gravelly cove, that was shaded by three or four enormous weeping-willows, and presented the very picture of peace and repose. It was altogether a retired and rural bit, there being near it no regular landing, no reels for seines, nor any of those signs that denote a place of resort. A single cottage stood on a small natural terrace, elevated some ten or twelve feet above the rich bottom that sustained the willows. This cottage was the very *beau idéal* of rustic neatness and home comfort. It was of stone, one story in height, with a high pointed roof, and had a Dutch-looking gable that faced the river, and which contained the porch and outer door. The stones were white as the driven snow, having been washed a few weeks before. The windows had the charm of irregularity; and everything about the dwelling proclaimed a former century, and a regime different from that under which we were then living. In fact, the figures 1698, let in as iron braces to the wall of the gable, announced that the house was quite as old as the second structure at Clawbonny.

The garden of this cottage was not large, but it was in admirable order. It lay entirely in the rear of the dwelling; and behind it, again, a small orchard, containing about a hundred trees, on which

the fruit began to show itself in abundance, lay against the sort of amphitheatre that almost enclosed this little nook against the intrusion and sight of the rest of the world. There were also half a dozen huge cherry trees, from which the fruit had not yet altogether disappeared, near the house, to which they served the double purpose of ornament and shade. The out-houses seemed to be as old as the dwelling, and were in quite as good order.

As we drew near the shore, I directed Neb to cease sculling, and sat gazing at this picture of retirement, and, apparently, of content, while the boat drew towards the gravelly beach, under the impetus already received.

"This is a hermitage I think I could stand, Miles," said Marble, whose look had not been off the spot since the moment we left the sloop's side. "This is what I should call a human hermitage, and none of your out and out solitudes Room for pigs and poultry; a nice gravelly beach for your boat; good fishing in the offing, I'll answer for it; a snug shoulder-of-mutton sort of a house; trees as big as a two-decker's lower masts; and company within hail, should a fellow happen to take it into his head that he was getting melancholy. This is just the spot I would like to fetch-up in, when it became time to go into dock. What a place to smoke a segar in is that bench up yonder, under the cherry tree; and grog must have a double flavour alongside of that spring of fresh water!"

"You could become the owner of this very place, Moses, and then we should be neighbours, and might visit each other by water. It cannot be much more than fifty miles from this spot to Clawbonny."

"I dare say, now, that they would think of asking, for a place like this, as much money as would buy a good wholesome ship—a regular A. No. 1."

"No such thing; a thousand or twelve hundred dollars would purchase the house, and all the land we can see—some twelve or fifteen acres, at the most. You have more than two thousand salted away, I know, Moses, between prize-money, wages, adventures, and other matters."

"I could hold my head up under two thousand, of a sartainty. I wish the place was a little nearer Clawbonny, say eight or ten miles off; and then I do think I should talk to the people about a trade."

"It's quite unnecessary, after all. I have quite as snug a cove, near the creek bluff at Clawbonny, and will build a house for you there, you shall not tell from a ship's cabin; that would be more to your fancy."

"I've thought of that, too, Miles, and at one time fancied it would be a prettyish sort of an idee; but it won't stand logarithms, at all. You may build a room that shall have its cabin *look*, but you can't build one that'll have a cabin *natur*' You may get carlins, and transoms, and lockers and bulkheads all right; but where are you to get your motion? What's a cabin without motion? It would soon be like the sea in the calm latitudes, offensive to the senses. No! none of your bloody motionless cabins for me. If I'm afloat, let me be afloat; if I'm ashore, let me be ashore."

Ashore we were by this time, the boat's keel grinding gently on the pebbles of the beach. We landed and walked towards the cottage, there being nothing about the place to forbid our taking this liberty. I told Marble we would ask for a drink of milk, two cows being in sight, cropping the rich herbage of a beautiful little pasture. This expedient at first seemed unnecessary, no one appearing about the place to question our motives, or to oppose our progress. When we reached the door of the cottage, we found it open, and could look within without violating any of the laws of civilization. There

was no vestibule, or entry; but the door communicated directly with a room of some size, and which occupied the whole front of the building. I dare say this single room was twenty feet square, besides being of a height a little greater than was then customary in buildings of that class. This apartment was neatness itself. It had a home-made, but really pretty, carpet on the floor; contained a dozen old-fashioned, high-back chairs, in some dark wood; two or three tables, in which one might see his face; a couple of mirrors of no great size, but of quaint gilded ornaments; a beaufet with some real china in it; and the other usual articles of a country residence that was somewhat above the ordinary farm-houses of the region, and yet as much below the more modest of the abodes of the higher class. I supposed the cottage to be the residence of some small family that had seen more of life than was customary with the mere husbandman, and yet not enough to raise it much above the level of the husbandman's homely habits.

We were looking in from the porch, on this scene of rural peace and faultless neatness, when an inner door opened in the deliberate manner that betokens age, and the mistress of the cottage appeared. She was a woman approaching seventy, of middle size, a quiet but firm step, and an air of health. Her dress was of the fashion of the previous century, plain, but as neat as everything around her—a spotless white apron seeming to bid defiance to the approach of anything that could soil its purity. The countenance of this old woman certainly did not betoken any of the refinement which is the result of education and good company; but it denoted benevolence, a kind nature, and feeling. We were saluted without surprise, and invited in, to be seated.

"It isn't often that sloops anchor here," said the old woman-lady, it would be a stretch of politeness to call her—their favourite places being higher up, and lower down, the river."

"And how do you account for that, mother?" asked Marble, who seated himself and addressed the mistress of the cottage with a seaman's frankness. "To my fancy, this is the best anchorage I've seen in many a day; one altogether to be coveted. One might be as much alone as he liked, in a spot like this, without absolutely turning your bloody hermit."

The old woman gazed at Marble like one who scarce know what to make of such an animal; and yet her look was mild and indulgent.

"I account for the boatmen's preferring other places to this," she said, "by the circumstance that there is no tavern here; while there is one two miles above, and another two miles below us."

"Your remark that there is no tavern here, reminds me of the necessity of apologizing for coming so boldly to your door," I answered; "but we sailors mean no impertinence, though we are so often guilty of it in landing."

"You are heartily welcome. I am glad to see them that understand how to treat an old woman kindly, and know how to pity and pardon them that do not. At my time of life we get to learn the value of fair words and good treatment, for it's only a short time it will be in our power to show either to our fellow-creatures."

"Your favourable disposition to your fellows comes from living all your days in a spot as sweet as this."

"I would much rather think that it comes from God. He alone is the source of all that is good within us."

"Yet a spot like this must have its influence on a character. I dare say you have lived long in this very house, which, old us you

profess to be, seems to be much older than yourself. It has probably been your abode ever since your marriage?"

"And long before, sir. I was born in this house, as was my father before me. You are right in saying that I have dwelt in it ever since my marriage, for I dwelt in it long before."

"This is not very encouraging for my friend here, who took such a fancy to your cottage, as we came ashore, as to wish to own it; but I scarce think he will venture to purchase, now he knows how dear it must be to you."

"And has your friend no home—no place in which to put his family?"

"Neither home nor family, my good mother," answered Marble for himself; "and so much the greater reason, you will think, why I ought to begin to think of getting both as soon as possible. I never had father or mother, to my knowledge; nor house, nor home of any sort, but a ship. I forgot; I was a hermit once, and set myself up in that trade, with a whole island to myself; but I soon gave up all to natur', and got out of that scrape as fast as I could. The business didn't suit me."

The old woman looked at Marble intently. I could see by her countenance that the off-hand, sincere, earnest manner of the mate had taken some unusual hold of her feelings.

"Hermit!" the good woman repeated with curiosity; "I have often heard and read of such people; but you are not at all like them I have fancied to be hermits."

"Another proof I undertook a business for which I was not fit. I suppose a man before he sets up for a hermit ought to know

something of his ancestors, as one looks to the pedigree of a horse in order to find out whether he is fit for a racer. Now, as I happen to know nothing of mine, it is no wonder I fell into a mistake. It's an awkward thing, old lady, for a man to be born without a name."

The eye of our hostess was still bright and full of animation, and I never saw a keener look than she fastened on the mate, as he delivered himself in this, one of his usual fits of misanthropical feeling.

"And were *you* born without a name?" she asked, after gazing intently at the other.

"Sartain. Everybody is born with only one name; but I happened to be born without any name at all."

"This is so extr'or'nary, sir," added our old hostess, more interested than I could have supposed possible for a stranger to become in Marble's rough bitterness, "that I should like to hear how such a thing could be."

"I am quite ready to tell you all about it, mother; but, as one good turn deserves another, I shall ask you first to answer me a few questions about the ownership of this house, and cove, and orchard. When you have told your story, I am ready to tell mine."

"I see how it is," said the old woman, in alarm. "You are sent here by Mr. Van Tassel, to inquire about the money due on the mortgage, and to learn whether it is likely to be paid or not."

"We are not sent here at all, my good old lady," I now thought it time to interpose, for the poor woman was very obviously much alarmed, and in a distress that even her aged and wrinkled countenance could not entirely conceal. "We are just what you

see—people belonging to that sloop, who have come ashore to stretch their legs, and have never heard of any Mr. Van Tassel, or any money, or any mortgage."

"Thank Heaven for that!" exclaimed the old woman, seeming to relieve her mind, as well as body, by a heavy sigh. "'Squire Van Tassel is a hard man; and a widow woman, with no relative at hand but a grand-darter that is just sixteen, is scarce able to meet him. My poor old husband always maintained that the money had been paid; but, now he is dead and gone, 'Squire Van Tassel brings forth the bond and mortgage, and says, 'If you can prove that these are paid, I'm willing to give them up.'"

"This is so strange an occurrence, my dear old lady," I observed, "that you have only to make us acquainted with the facts, to get another supporter in addition to your grand-daughter. It is true, I am a stranger, and have come here purely by accident; but Providence sometimes appears to work in this mysterious manner, and I have a strong presentiment we may be of use to you. Relate your difficulties, then; and you shall have the best legal advice in the State, should your case require it."

The old woman seemed embarrassed; but, at the same time, she seemed touched. We were utter strangers to her, it is true; yet there is a language in sympathy which goes beyond that of the tongue, and which, coming *from* the heart, goes *to* the heart. I was quite sincere in my offers, and this sincerity appears to have produced its customary fruits. I was believed; and, after wiping away a tear or two that forced themselves into her eyes, our hostess answered me as frankly as I had offered my aid.

"You do not look like 'Squire Van Tassel's men, for they seem to me to think the place is theirs already. Such craving, covetous creatur's I never before laid eyes on! I hope I may trust you?"

"Depend on us, mother," cried Marble, giving the old woman a cordial squeeze of the hand. "My heart is in this business, for my mind was half made up, at first sight, to own this spot myself—by honest purchase, you'll understand me, and not by any of your land-shark tricks—and, such being the case, you can easily think I'm not inclined to let this Mr. Tassel have it,"

"It would be almost as sorrowful a thing to *sell* this place," the good woman answered, her countenance confirming all she said in words, "as to have it torn from me by knaves. I have told you that even my father was born in this very house. I was his only child; and when God called him away, which he did about twelve years after my marriage, the little farm came to me, of course. Mine it would have been at this moment, without let or hindrance of any sort, but for a fault committed in early youth. Ah! my friends, it is hopeless to do evil, and expect to escape the consequences."

"The evil *you* have done, my good mother," returned Marble, endeavouring to console the poor creature, down whose cheeks the tears now fairly began to run; "the evil you have done, my good mother, can be no great matter. If it was a question about a rough tar like myself, or even of Miles there, who's a sort of sea-saint, something might be made of it, I make no doubt; but your account must be pretty much all credit, and no debtor."

"That is a state that befalls none of earth, my young friend,"—Marble *was* young, compared to his companion, though a plump fifty,—*"My sin was no less than to break one of God's commandments."*

I could see that my mate was a good deal confounded at this ingenuous admission; for, in his eyes, breaking the commandments was either killing, stealing, or blaspheming. The other sins of the decalogue he had come by habit to regard as peccadilloes.

"I think this must be a mistake, mother," he said, in a sort of consoling tone. "You may have fallen into some oversights, or mistakes; but this breaking of the commandments is rather serious sort of work."

"Yet I broke the fifth; I forgot to honour my father and mother. Nevertheless, the Lord has been gracious; for my days have already reached threescore-and-ten. But this is His goodness—not any merit of my own!"

"Is it not a proof that the error has been forgiven?" I ventured to remark. "If penitence can purchase peace, I feel certain you have earned that relief."

"One never knows! I think this calamity of the mortgage, and the danger I run of dying without a roof to cover my head, may be all traced up to that one act of disobedience, I have been a mother myself—may say I am a mother now, for my grand-daughter is as dear to me as was her blessed mother—and it is when we look *down*, rather than when we look *up*, as it might be, that we get to understand the true virtue of this commandment."

"If it were impertinent curiosity that instigates the question, my old friend," I added, "it would not be in my power to look you in the face, as I do now, while begging you to let me know your difficulties. Tell them in your own manner, but tell them with confidence; for, I repeat, we have the power to assist you, and can command the best legal advice of the country."

Again the old woman looked at me intently through her spectacles; then, as if her mind was made up to confide in our honesty, she disburthened it of its secrets.

"It would be wrong to tell you a part of my story, without telling you all," she began; "for you might think Van Tassel and his set are alone to blame, while my conscience tells me that little has happened that is not a just punishment for my great sin. You'll have patience, therefore, with an old woman, and hear her whole tale; for mine is not a time of life to mislead any. The days of white-heads are numbered; and, was it not for Kitty, the blow would not be quite so hard on me. You must know, we are Dutch by origin—come of the ancient Hollanders of the colony—and were Van Duzers by name. It's like, friends," added the good woman, hesitating, "that you are Yankees by birth?"

"I cannot say I am," I answered, "though of English extraction. My family is long of New York, but it does not mount back quite as far as the time of the Hollanders."

"And your friend? He is silent; perhaps he is of New England? I would not wish to hurt his feelings, for my story will bear a little hard, perhaps, on his love of home."

"Never mind me, mother, but rowse it all up like entered cargo," said Marble, in his usual bitter way when alluding to his own birth. "There's not the man breathing that one can speak more freely before on such matters, than Moses Marble."

"Marble!—that's a *hard* name," returned the woman slightly smiling; "but a *name* is not a *heart*. My parents were Dutch; and you may have heard how it was before the Revolution, between the Dutch and the Yankees. Near neighbours, they did not love each other. The Yankees said the Dutch were fools, and the Dutch said the Yankees were knaves. Now, as you may easily suppose, I was born before the Revolution, when King George II. was on the throne and ruled the country; and though it was long after the English got to be our masters, it was before our people had

forgotten their language and their traditions. My father himself was born after the English governors came among us, as I've heard him say; but it mattered not—he loved Holland to the last, and the customs of his fathers."

"All quite right, mother," said Marble, a little impatiently; "but what of all that? It's as nat'ral for a Dutchman to love Holland, as it is for an Englishman to love Hollands. I've been in the Low Countries, and must say it's a muskrat sort of a life the people lead; neither afloat nor ashore."

The old woman regarded Marble with more respect after this declaration; for in that day, a travelled man was highly esteemed among us. In her eyes, it was a greater exploit to have seen Amsterdam, than it would now be to visit Jerusalem. Indeed, it is getting rather discreditable to a man of the world not to have seen the Pyramids, the Red Sea, and the Jordan.

"My father loved it not the less, though he never saw the land of his ancestors," resumed the old woman. "Notwithstanding the jealousy of the Yankees, among us Dutch, and the mutual dislike, many of the former came among us to seek their fortunes. They are not a home-staying people, it would seem; and I cannot deny that cases have happened in which they have been known to get away the farms of some of the Netherlands stock, in a way that it would have been better not to have happened."

"You speak considerately, my dear woman," I remarked, "and like one that has charity for all human failing."

"I ought to do so for my own sins, and I ought to do so to them of New England; for my own husband was of that race."

"Ay, now the story is coming round regularly, Miles," said Marble, nodding his head in approbation. "It will touch on love next, and, if trouble do not follow, set me down as an ill-nat'ed old bachelor. Love in a man's heart is like getting heated cotton, or shifting ballast, into a ship's hold."

"I must confess to it," continued our hostess, smiling in spite of her real sorrows—sorrows that were revived by thus recalling the events of her early life—"a young man of Yankee birth came among us as a schoolmaster, when I was only fifteen. Our people were anxious enough to have us all taught to read English, for many had found the disadvantage of being ignorant of the language of their rulers, and of the laws. I was sent to George Wetmore's school, like most of the other young people of the neighbourhood, and remained his scholar for three years. If you were on the hill above the orchard yonder, you might see the school-house at this moment; for it is only a short walk from our place, and a walk that I made four times a day for just three years."

"One can see how the land lies now," cried Marble, lighting a segar, for he thought no apology necessary for smoking under a Dutch roof. "The master taught his scholar something more than he found in the spelling-book, or the catechism. We'll take your word about the school-house, seeing it is out of view."

"It was out of sight, truly, and that may have been the reason my parents took it so hard when George Wetmore asked their leave to marry me. This was not done until he had walked home with me, or as near home as the brow on yon hill, for a whole twelvemonth, and had served a servitude almost as long, and as patient, as that of Jacob for Rachel."

"Well, mother, how did the old people receive the question? Like good-natured parents, I hope, for George's sake."

"Rather say like the children of Holland, judging of the children of New England. They would not hear of it, but wished me to marry my own cousin, Petrus Storm, who was not greatly beloved even in his own family."

"Of course you down anchor, and said you never would quit the moorings of home?"

"If I rightly understand you, sir, I did something very different. I got privately married to George, and he kept school near a twelvemonth longer, up behind the hill, though most of the young women were taken away from his teaching."

"Ay, the old way; the door was locked after the horse was stolen! Well, you were married, mother—"

"After a time, it was necessary for me to visit a kinswoman who lived a little down the river. There my first child was born, unknown to my parents; and George gave it in charge to a poor woman who had lost her own babe, for we were still afraid to let our secret be known to my parents. Now commenced the punishment for breaking the fifth commandment."

"How's that, Miles?" demanded Moses. "Is it ag'in the commandments for a married woman to have a son?"

"Certainly not, my friend; though it is a breach of the commandments not to honour our parents. This good woman alludes to her marrying contrary to the wishes of her father and mother."

"Indeed I do, sir, and dearly have I been punished for it. In a few weeks I returned home, and was followed by the sad news of the death of my first-born. The grief of these tidings drew the

secret from me; and nature spoke so loud in the hearts of my poor parents, that they forgave all, took George home, and ever afterwards treated him as if he also had been their own child. But it was too late; had it happened a few weeks earlier, my own precious babe might have been saved to me."

"You cannot know that, mother; we all die when our time comes."

"His time had not come. The miserable wretch to whom George trusted the boy, exposed him among strangers, to save herself trouble, and to obtain twenty dollars at as cheap a rate as possible—"

"Hold!" I interrupted. "In the name of Heaven, my good woman, in what year did this occur?"

Marble looked at me in astonishment, though he clearly had glimpses of the object of my question.

"It was in the month of June, 17—. For thirty long, long years, I supposed my child had actually died; and then the mere force of conscience told me the truth. The wretched woman could not carry the secret with her into the grave, and she sent for me to hear the sad revelation."

"Which was to say that she left the child in a basket, on a tombstone, in a marble-worker's yard, in town; in the yard of a man whose name was Durfee?" I said, as rapidly as I could speak.

"She did, indeed! though it is a marvel to me that a stranger should know this. What will be God's pleasure next?"

Marble groaned. He hid his face in his hands, while the poor woman looked from one of us to the other, in bewildered

expectation of what was to follow. I could not leave her long in doubt; but, preparing her for what was to follow, by little and little I gave her to understand that the man she saw before her was her son. After half a century of separation, the mother and child had thus been thrown together by the agency of an inscrutable Providence! The reader will readily anticipate the character of the explanations that succeeded. Of the truth of the circumstances there could not be a shadow of doubt, when everything was related and compared. Mrs. Wetmore had ascertained from her unfaithful nurse the history of her child as far as the alms-house; but thirty years had left a gap in the information she received, and it was impossible for her to obtain the name under which he had left that institution. The Revolution was just over when she made her application, and it was thought that some of the books had been taken away by a refugee. Still, there were a plenty of persons to supply traditions and conjecture; and so anxious were she and her husband to trace these groundless reports to their confirmation or refutation, that much money and time were thrown away in the fruitless attempts. At length, one of the old attendants of the children's department was discovered, who professed to know the whole history of the child brought from the stone-cutter's yard. This woman doubtless was honest, but her memory had deceived her. She said that the boy had been called Stone, instead of Marble; a mistake that was natural enough in itself, but which was probably owing to the fact that another child of the first name had really left the institution a few months before Moses took his leave. This Aaron Stone had been traced, first, as an apprentice to a tradesman; thence into a regiment of foot in the British army, which regiment had accompanied the rest of the forces, at the evacuation, November 25th, 1783.

The Wetmores fancied they were now on the track of their child. He was traced down to a period within a twelvemonth of that of the search, and was probably to be found in England, still

wearing the livery of the king. After a long consultation between the disconsolate parents, it was determined that George Wetmore should sail for England in the hope of recovering their son. But, by this time, money was scarce. These worthy people were enabled to live in comfort on their little farm, but they were not rich in cash. All the loose coin was gone in the previous search, and even a small debt had been contracted to enable them to proceed as far as they had. No alternative remained but to mortgage their home. This was done with great reluctance; but what will not a parent do for his child? A country lawyer, of the name of Van Tassel, was ready enough to advance five hundred on a place that was worth quite three thousand dollars. This man was one of the odious class of country usurers, a set of cormorants that is so much worse than their town counterparts, because their victims are usually objects of real, and not speculative distress, and as ignorant and unpractised as they are necessitous. It is wonderful with what far-sighted patience one of these wretches will bide his time, in order to effect a favourite acquisition. Mrs. Wetmore's little farm was very desirable to this 'Squire Van Tassel, for reasons in addition to its intrinsic value; and for years nothing could be kinder and more neighbourly than his indulgence. Interest was allowed to accumulate, until the whole debt amounted to the sum of a thousand dollars. In the mean time the father went to England, found the soldier after much trouble and expense, ascertained that Stone knew his parents, one of whom had died in the alms-house, and spent all his money.

Years of debt and anxiety succeeded, until the father sunk under his misfortunes. An only daughter also died, leaving Kitty a legacy to her widowed mother, the other parent having died even before her birth. Thus was Katharine Van Duzer, our old hostess, left to struggle on nearly alone, at the decline of life, with a poverty that was daily increasing, years, and this infant grand-daughter. Just before his death, however, George Wetmore had succeeded

in selling a portion of his farm, that which was least valuable to himself, and with the money he paid off Van Tassel's mortgage. This was his own account of the matter, and he showed to his wife Van Tassel's receipt, the money having been paid at the county town, where the bond and mortgage could not be then produced. This was shortly before Wetmore's last illness. A twelvemonth after his death, the widow was advised to demand the bond, and to take the mortgage off record. But the receipt was not to be found. With a woman's ignorance of such matters, the widow let this fact leak out; and her subsequent demand for the release was met with a counter one for evidence of payment. This was the commencement of Van Tassel's hostile attitude; and things had gone as far as a foreclosure, and an advertisement for a sale, when the good woman thus opportunely discovered her son!

Chapter III

*

I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

Shylock.

It is not easy to describe the immediate effect of this discovery on either of the parties most concerned. Not a doubt remained on the mind of either, after the facts were explained, of the reality of the relationship; for that was so simply proved, as to place the circumstance beyond all dispute. Mrs. Wetmore thought of her lost son as of an innocent smiling babe; and here she found him a red-faced, hard-featured, weather-beaten tar, already verging towards age, and a man of manners that were rough, if not rude. She could not at first possess any knowledge of the better points in his character, and was compelled to receive this boon from Providence as it was offered. Nevertheless, a mother's love is not easily dissatisfied, or smothered; and, ere I left the house, I could see the old woman's eyes fixed on Marble with an expression of interest and tenderness they had not manifested previously to the revelations.

As for the mate himself, now that the fondest wish of his life was so unexpectedly gratified, he was taken so much by surprise that he appeared to think something was wanting. He found his mother

the reputable widow of a reputable man, of a class in life quite equal to his own, living on a property that was small, certainly, and involved, but property that had been long in her family. The truth was, Marble felt so much at this unlooked-for appeal to his gentler feelings, that one of his stern nature did not know how to answer it on the emergency; and the obstinacy of his temperament rather induced him to resist, than to yield to such unwonted sentiments, I could see he was satisfied with his mother, while he was scarcely satisfied with himself; and, with a view to place both parties in truer positions, I desired Moses to walk down and look at the boat, while I remained alone with his new-found parent. This was not done, however, until all the explanations had been made, and the mother had both blessed and wept over her child. It was done, indeed, principally to relieve Marble from the oppression of feeling created by this very scene.

As soon as alone with Mrs. Wetmore, I explained to her my own connection with Marble, and gave her a sort of apologetic account of his life and character, keeping down the weak points, and dwelling on the strong. I set her mind at ease, at once, on the subject of the farm; for, should the worst happen, her son had double the amount of money that would be necessary to discharge the mortgage.

"The debt was incurred, my dear Mrs. Wetmore, in his behalf; and he will be happy to discharge it on the spot. I would advise you to pay the money at once. Should the receipt ever be found, this Van Tassel will be obliged to refund; for, though the law winks at many wrongs, it will not wink at one so atrocious as this, provided you can satisfy it with proof. I shall leave Moses—"

"His name is Oloff, or Oliver," interrupted the old woman easierly "I named him after my own father, and had him duly christened, before he was entrusted to the nurse, in the hope it might soften his

grandfather's heart, when he came to know of my marriage. Oloff Van Duzer Wetmore is his real name."

I smiled to think of Marble's sailing under such an appellation, and was about to suggest a compromise, when the subject of our discourse returned. The mate had regained his composure during the half-hour he had been absent; and I saw by the kind glance he threw on his mother, whose look answered his own more naturally than I could have hoped, that things were getting right; and, by way of removing the awkwardness of excessive sensibility, I pursued the discourse.

"We were talking of your true name, Moses, as you came in," I said. "It will never do for you to hail by one name, while your mother hails by another. You'll have to cut adrift from Moses Marble altogether."

"If I do, may I be—"

"Hush, hush—you forget where you are, and in whose presence you stand."

"I hope my son will soon learn that he is always in the presence of his God," observed the mother, plaintively.

"Ay, ay—that's all right, mother, and you shall do with me just what you please in any of them matters; but as for not being Moses Marble, you might as well ask me not to be myself. I should be another man, to change my name. A fellow might as well go without clothes, as go without a name; and mine came so hard, I don't like to part with it. No, no—had it come to pass, now, that my parents had been a king and a queen, and that I was to succeed 'em on the throne, I should reign as King Moses Marble, or not reign at all."

"You'll think better of this, and take out a new register under your lawful designation."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, mother, and that will satisfy all parties. I'll bend on the old name to the new one, and sail under both."

"I care not how you are called, my son, so long as no one has need to blush for the name you bear. This gentleman tells me you are an honest and true-hearted man; and those are blessings for which I shall never cease to thank God."

"Miles has been singing my praises, has he! I can tell you, mother, you had need look out for Miles's tongue Natur' intended him for a lawyer, and it's mere accident his being a sailor, though a capital one he is. But what may be my name, according to law?"

"Oloff Van Duser Wetmore Moses Marble, according to your own expedient of sailing under all your titles. You can ring the changes, however, and call yourself Moses Oloff Marble Van Duser Wetmore, if you like that better."

Moses laughed, and as I saw that both he and his new-found mother were in a fit state to be left together, and that the sun now wanted but an hour or two of setting, I rose to take my leave.

"You will remain with your mother to-night, Marble," I observed. "I will keep the sloop at an anchor until I can see you in the morning, when we will settle the future a little more deliberately."

"I should not like to lose my son so soon after finding him," the old woman anxiously remarked.

"No fear of me, mother—I berth under your roof to-night, and so many more in the bargain, that you'll be glad enough to be rid of me in the end."

I then left the house, followed by Marble, towards the boat. As we reached the little piece of bottom-land, I heard a sort of suppressed sob from the mate, and, turning round, was surprised to see the tears running down his sun-burned cheeks. His wrought-up feelings had at last obtained the mastery; and this rude, but honest creature, had fairly given in, under the excitement of this strange admixture of joy, wonder, shame, and natural emotion. I took his hand, gave it a hearty squeeze, but said nothing; though I stopped, unwilling to go nearer to Neb until my companion had regained his composure. This he did, sufficiently to speak, in the course of a minute or two.

"It's all like a dream-to me, Miles," Moses at length muttered—"more out of natur' like, than setting up for a hermit."

"You'll soon get accustomed to the change, Marble; then everything will seem in the ordinary way, and natural."

"To think of my being a son, and having a real, living mother!"

"You must have known that you had parents once, though you are fortunate in finding one of them alive at your time of life."

"And she an honest woman! A mother the President of the United States, or the first commodore in the navy, needn't be ashamed of!"

"All that is fortunate, certainly; especially the first."

"She's a bloody good-looking old woman in the bargain. I'll have her dressed up and carry her down to town, the first opportunity."

"What would you give an old woman that trouble for? You'll think better of these matters, in the long run."

"Better! Yes, I'll take her to Philadelphia, and perhaps to Baltimore. There's the gardens, and the theatres, and the museums, and lots of things that I dare say the dear old soul never laid eyes on."

"I'm mistaken in your mother, if she would not prefer a church to all of them put together."

"Well, there's churches in all of them towns. Put it on a religious footing, if you will, and I ought to take my mother as soon as possible down to York. She's old, you see, and cannot live for ever, just to oblige me; and here has she been tied down to one church all her days, giving her no ch'ice nor opportunity. I dare say, now, variety is just as agreeable in religion, as in anything else."

"You are nearer right there, Moses, than you think yourself, possibly. But we can talk of all these things to-morrow. A good night's rest will give us cooler heads in the morning."

"I shall not sleep a wink for thinking of it. No, no—I'll make the old lady pack up before breakfast, and we'll sail in the sloop. I'll take her aboard the Dawn with me in town, and a comfortable time we'll have of it in her cabins. She has as good state-rooms as a yacht."

There were no liners in those days; but a ship with two cabins was a miracle of convenience.

"Your mother will hardly suit a ship, Moses; and a ship will hardly suit your mother."