

THE GRIP OF HONOR

By... **Cyrus Townsend Brady,**

Author of "The Southerners," "In the Wasp's Nest," Etc.

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CHAPTER I.

A STERN CHASE ON A LEE SHORE.
THE wind is freshening. We gain upon her easily, I think, sir."

"Decidedly. This is our best point of sailing and our best wind too. We can't be going less than 10 knots," said the captain, looking critically over the bows at the water racing alongside.

"I can almost make out the name on her stern now with the naked eye," replied the other, staring hard ahead through the drift and spray.

"Have you a glass there, Mr. O'Neill?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir; here it is," answered that gentleman, handing him a long, old fashioned, cumbersome brass telescope, which he at once adjusted and focused on the ship they were chasing.

"Ah!" said the elder of the two speakers, a small, slender man, standing lightly poised on the topgallant fore-castle with the careless confidence of a veteran seaman as he examined the chase through the glass which the taller and younger officer handed him. "I can read it quite plainly with this. The M-a-i-d—Maidstone, a trader evidently, as I see no gun ports nor anything that betokens an armament." He ran the tubes of the glass into each other and handed it back, remarking, "At this rate we shall have her in a short time."

"She is a fast one, though," replied the other. "It's no small task for anything afloat to show us her heels for so long a time. Let me see; it was six bells in the morning watch when we raised her, was it not, sir?"

"Yes, 'tis rather remarkable going for a merchant vessel, but we have the heels of her and will get her soon unless she goes to the bottom on those reefs round the Land's End yonder. It's a nasty place to be tearing through in that wild way," he added thought-

fully. "Shall I give her a shot, sir, from the starboard bow chaser?"

"Not just yet; it would be useless, as we are not quite within range, and she would pay no heed; besides, we shall have her without it, and 'tis hardly worth while wasting a shot upon her at present."

The brief conversation took place forward upon the fore-castle of the American Continental ship Ranger, between her captain, John Paul Jones, and her first lieutenant, one Barry O'Neill, marquis de Richemont, sometime officer in the navy of his most Christian majesty the king of France. O'Neill was the son of a marshal of France, an Irish gentleman of high birth and position, who had gone out as a mere lad with the young Stuart in the '45, and whose property had been confiscated and himself attainted and sentenced to death for high treason. Fortunately he had escaped to the continent, and had entered the service of the king of France, where, through his extraordinary ability and courage, coupled with several brilliant opportunities he had made and enjoyed, he had risen to exalted station and great wealth. He had always continued more or less of a conspirator in the cause of the royal Stuarts, however, and his son, following in his footsteps, had been mixed up in every treasonable Jacobite enterprise which had been undertaken, and was under the same ban of the British throne as was his father.

When Paul Jones in the historic ship Ranger came to France, O'Neill, moved by a spirit of adventure and his ever present desire to strike a blow at King George, received permission to enter the American service temporarily, with several other French officers. The Ranger was already some days out on her successful cruise, when, early on a morning in the month of April in the year 1778, they had sighted a ship trying to beat around the Land's End. Sail had at once been made in chase, and the stranger was now almost within the grasp of the American pursuers.

"It seems to me, sir," said O'Neill to the captain, "that unless she goes about presently she won't weather that long reef over beyond her, where those breakers are."

"Aye," said Jones, "and if she goes about, she's ours, and"—He paused significantly.

"If not, sir?"

"She's God's!" added the captain solemnly.

The wind was blowing at a furious rate. The Ranger had a single reef in her topsails, with her topgallant sails set above them. The masts were straining and buckling like bound giants, and the ship quivered and trembled like a smitten harp string as she pitched and plunged in the heavy seas.

The wind roaring through the iron taut rigging and the wild spray dashing over the sides rendered conversation almost impossible. The motley crew of the Ranger were gathered forward, clustering on the rail and lower shrouds, keeping, of course, at a respectful distance from their captain and his first lieutenant and some of the other officers grouped near them.

"She must tack now," said Jones at last, "or she's lost. I know these waters; I have sailed them many times when I was a boy. I doubt if they can weather that reef even—By heavens! There's a woman on board of her, too!"

he exclaimed as his keen eye detected the flutter of drapery and a dash of color among the little group of men on the deck of the Maidstone, evidently staring aft at her relentless pursuer.

"See everything in readiness for quick work here. Gentlemen," continued the captain, "to your stations all. Mr. O'Neill, remain with me. The men hastened to their places at once, and a little silence supervened.

"You may give her a shot now, Mr. O'Neill," said Jones at last. "It may bring them to tacking and save them from wreck. Pitch it alongside of her; we don't want to hurt the ship."

"Clear away that starboard bow chaser," called the lieutenant, and the men, scarcely waiting for his word of command, cast loose the gun. "Aft there, stand by to give her a touch of the helm!" he cried, with raised voice.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came the prompt reply. "Price," continued O'Neill to the captain of the piece, "you need not hit her. Just throw a shot alongside of her. Are you ready?"

"All ready, sir," answered the old seaman, carefully shifting his quid and squinting along the gun.

"Luff!" shouted O'Neill in his powerful voice. The quartermaster put the wheel over a few spokes, and the Ranger shot up into the wind a little and hung quivering a moment with checked way.

"Give her a touch with the right hand spike, lads," said old Price. "Steady; shove in that quoin a little; easy there; overhaul those tackles! All ready, sir?"

"Now!" cried O'Neill. A booming roar and a cloud of smoke broke out forward, and the ball ricocheted along the water and sank just under the quarter of the chase.

"Let her go off again," cried O'Neill to the quartermaster, and a moment



"A good shot, Master Price."

later as the sails filled and she heeled once more to the wind, "Very well dyce; enough off," he cried.

"A good shot, Master Price, and a glass of grog for you presently in reward," said Jones quietly. "Ah, we shall have some answer at any rate."

At this moment a small red flag broke out from the gaff of the English vessel.

"Show our own colors aft there, though they can scarcely see them," cried the captain. "He's a plucky one, that fellow. What's he doing now? Fore Gad, he's got a gun over the quarter, a stern chaser. Must have arms on board."

The Ranger was rushing through the water again at a rapidly increasing rate, almost burying her lee cathead in the foaming sea under the freshening breeze, and was now very near the Maidstone, which at this moment discharged the small stern chaser which had been dragged astern, the shot from which passed harmlessly through the belying foresail above their heads.

"Give her another, Price," said O'Neill upon a nod from Jones.

"Into her this time, sir?"

"Yes; anywhere you like."

The Ranger luffed again, losing a little distance as she did so, but weathering appreciably on the stranger, and this time the flying splinters from the stern of the chase showed that the shot had met its mark. There was a sudden scattering of the men upon her quarter, and most of them disappeared, but the young girl could be seen holding on to the weather sparker vang and apparently looking defiantly at them. O'Neill took up the glass and examined her.

"Faith, sir, she looks as pretty as she is brave. See for yourself, sir," he added as he handed the telescope to the captain, who took a careful look at her through the glass.

"You have a good eye for the beautiful," he replied, smiling, "even at a long range. Secure the bow chaser, sir; we are within musket range of her."

While this was being done the Ranger had crept up on the stranger till her bow began to overreach the weather quarter of the other vessel. As they held on recklessly together suddenly the speed of the chase was diminished. Her helm was put down, and with sails quivering and swaying she swung up into the wind.

"We have her now," said Jones, springing on the rail and leaning over forward; "nay, it's too late. Missed stays! By heavens, she's in iron! She's doomed! Aft there, steady with the helm! Give her a good luff."

In the next instant, with a crash heard above the roar of the storm even upon the other ship, the ill fated Maidstone drove upon the reef broadside. The shock of meeting was tremendous. Her masts were snapped short off like pipestems; the howling gale jerked them over the sides, where they thundered and beat upon the ship with tremendous force. The girl disappeared.

"Breakers ahead!" on the instant roared out a half dozen voices in the fore-castle.

"Breakers on the starboard bow!" came the wild cry from all sides.

"Down with the helm—hard down!" shouted O'Neill, with a seaman's ready instinct, without waiting for the cap-

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tain. There was a moment of confusion on the deck. "Steady with the helm—steady, sir!" cried Jones in his powerful voice, with an imperious wave of his hand. "Silence fore and aft the decks! Every man to his station! Keep her a good full, quartermaster. Keep that helm as you have it. Look yonder, sir," he added, pointing to larboard to another danger. "Ready about, stations for stays! Aft with you, Mr. O'Neill, and see that the helm is shifted exactly as I direct. Make no mistake! Lively, men, for your lives!"

The eager crew sprang to their stations. There was another moment or two of confusion, and as they settled down the silence was broken only by the wind and waves. The water was seething and whirling under the fore-foot of the Ranger. The reefs upon which the Maidstone had crashed were a slender needle of rock over which the waves broke in seething fury as it thrust itself menacingly out of the angry ocean. They were right among the reefs, and only the most complete knowledge and consummate seamanship could save them. They were there.

To tack ship now and come up in the wind would throw them on the rocky needle; to go off would bring them down upon the other reefs. Jones, entirely master of the situation, perfectly cool in appearance, though his eyes snapped and sparkled with fire, leaned out above the knightheads and keenly scanned the sea before him. There was just room for the Ranger to pass between the two reefs. A hair's breadth on either side would mean destruction. As the captain watched the boiling water he seemed to detect through a slight change in the course a tremor in the hand on the wheel.

"Aft there!" he shouted promptly. "What are you about? Steady with that helm! No higher—nothing off!"

"Aye, aye, sir," replied O'Neill, standing watchfully at the con. "I will mind it myself."

The crash of the breakers as they writhed their white crested heads around the ship's bows and on either side was appalling to every one. They were right in them now—passing through them. The rocky now—passing on the larboard hand slipped by and drew astern. The wreck of the Maidstone was lost sight of in the flooding waves and driving spray of a rising gale. The ship was roaring through the seas at a terrific rate; the strain upon everything was tremendous; a broken spar, a parted rope, meant a lost ship.

"Very well dyce," cried the captain, casting a glance aloft at the weather leech of the topsails chivering in the fierce wind, the quivering masts and groaning yardarms, the lee shrouds hanging slack, the lee braces and head bowlines taut as strung wires, the tacks and sheets and the weather shrouds as rigid as iron bars, the new canvas like sheets of marble. The ship was heeled over until the lee channels were almost awash, the spray coming on in bucketfuls over the lee cathead. She was ready if ever she would be; that's what was at the touch.

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G. T. R. TIME TABLE
ARRIVALS.
30. From Toronto, Ig... 5.00 a.m.
32. From Hallburton... 8.55 a.m.
21. From Port Hope... 9.10 a.m.
22. From Toronto... 10.50 a.m.
30. From Cobocook... 10.10 a.m.
35. From Port Hope... 2.00 p.m.
36. From Port Hope... 5.20 p.m.
42. From I. B. & O. Jet... 6.23 p.m.
23. From Port Hope... 7.30 a.m.
24. From Whitby... 8.05 p.m.
24. From Toronto... 8.45 p.m.
56. From Midland... 8.10 p.m.
94. From Belleville... 5.50 p.m.
45. From Belleville... 10.20 p.m.

DEPARTURES.
12. For Belleville... 6.25 a.m.
51. For Whitby... 6.30 a.m.
21. For Toronto... 9.15 a.m.
22. For Port Hope... 10.50 a.m.
43. For I.B. & O. Jet... 11.00 a.m.
55. For Whitby... 11.05 a.m.
27. For Toronto... 12.05 p.m.
38. For Hallburton... 2.40 p.m.
23. For Toronto... 6.23 p.m.
51. For Cobocook... 6.35 p.m.

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